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AUTHOR	Carta, Judy; Renauer, Marita; Schiefelbusch, Jeanie; Terry, Barbara
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ABSTRACT

This manual presents instructional strategies developed by Project SLIDE (Skills for Learning Independence in Developmentally Appropriate Environments), a project that identified skills that general education kindergarten teachers found to be critical for students' success in their classrooms. After training in Project SLIDE strategies, students were found to be less likely to need special education services when they reached first grade, had higher social ratings from their teachers, and achieved higher developmental assessment scores. The cornerstone of SLIDE are four intervention strategies that have proven successful at improving children's transitions to their next environment. They target skills critical to children's independence in early educational settings. The strategies target four areas: (1) fostering smoother within-classroom transitions; (2) providing opportunities for practicing independent work; (3) facilitating active engagement during group instruction; and (4) teaching children how to self-assess. This manual devotes an entire chapter to each of these four classroom intervention strategies. Each chapter provides activities, implementation considerations, and a means to evaluate the impact of each component. In addition, the chapter on "Planning for Future Transitions" at the end of the manual discusses parental involvement strategies and assessment information. An appendix includes reproducible masters of key information. (CR)

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SLIDE

Juniper Gardens Children's Project

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Effective Instructional Strategies to Facilitate:

Classroom Transitions

Group Instruction

Independent Performance

And

Self-Assessment

(4th Edition)

Teacher's Manual for Project SLIDE

Skills for Learning Independence in Developmentally Appropriate Environment

Project SLIDE
Juniper Gardens Children's Project
650 Minnesota, 2nd Floor
Kansas City, KS 66101
(913) 321-3143
E-mail: carta@kuhub.cc.ukans.edu
Internet: http://www.lsi.ukans.edu/jg/slide.htm

Description and History

Juniper Gardens Children's Project (JGCP) is a community-based research, training, and service program dedicated to improving the developmental outcomes and academic and social achievements of children with and without disabilities in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Juniper Gardens Children's Project identifies significant problems in special education and human development, implements potential solutions to those problems, and documents the work so that similar problems can be solved in other settings. Many of the programs of JGCP are being conducted in the greater Kansas City area with outreach sites across the United States.

The Juniper Gardens Children's Project (JGCP) began in the mid-1960's when residents of Northeast Kansas City, Kansas joined with faculty from the University of Kansas to address concerns about child development in a low-income community. These founders, and those who have followed, have maintained lines of applied research based on federal and local funding. Results of this work have been published in the professional literatures of psychology, education, special education, and pediatrics among others.

Project SLIDE, one of the programs developed at JGCP, grew out of a research project that identified skills that general education kindergarten teachers found to be critical for success in their classrooms. The Project SLIDE instructional strategies were developed, and a longitudinal study was conducted to see whether these skills made a difference in children's outcomes. Longitudinal field tests validated the effectiveness of the intervention strategies and determined that children who received training in preschool or kindergarten in the Project SLIDE strategies:

- Were less likely to need special education services when they reached first grade
- Received higher social ratings from their teachers
- Achieved higher developmental assessment scores than a comparison group

Preparation of this manual was supported in part through Grant No. H024D10009 from the U.S. Department of Education, Handicapped Children's Early Education Project (HCEEP) and the U.S. Department of Education, Early Education Programs for Children with Disabilities (EEPCD). However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Past Contributors:

Jane Atwater
Greg Brewer
Judith Carta
Bob Christensen
Mitch Connell
Nancy Craig
Marleen Elliott
Susan Engelmann
Judy Estes
David Lutz
Lois Orth-Lopes
Marita Renauer
Phoebe Rinkel
Holly Scherer
Jeanie Schiefelbusch
Ilene Schwartz
Barbara Terry
Deborah Trissell

Contributors to Current Edition

Judy Carta
Marita Renauer
Jeanie Schiefelbusch
Barbara Terry

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Introduction to SLIDE

One of the important missions of early education is to help children become more independent and ready to meet classroom expectations. SLIDE (Skills for Learning Independence in Developmentally Appropriate Environments) was developed to assist teachers in preparing children to meet the expectations of the future classroom settings. SLIDE provides teachers with assessment tools for gathering information about teachers' behavioral expectations in the next setting and for determining individual children's current level of performance relative to those expectations. The intervention strategies help teachers organize their classroom to promote independence skills in the present setting while preparing children for future expectations.

Do you know what lies ahead next year for the children in your class? Are your classroom routines and activities gradually preparing them to meet the expectations in that future setting? Are there things you can do now that will help your children meet those expectations next year? SLIDE was developed to help you answer these frequently asked questions.

What Is SLIDE?

While making transitions from one grade level to the next poses challenges for many children, SLIDE offers several components to make those transitions easier and more successful for all children. You can use these components to develop an entire transition program or select one of the components to enhance your existing program. Here are some of the features available in SLIDE:

- **Classroom Intervention Strategies** that can be used to assist children in becoming more independent and ready to meet classroom expectations.
- **Assessment Strategies** that allow classroom teams to identify the expectations of future classroom settings and children's level of preparedness to meet them.
- **Parent Involvement Strategies** that provide options for parents to take part in decision-making regarding transitions and to foster children's independent behaviors at home.

For Whom Is SLIDE Most Appropriate?

SLIDE is appropriate for a wide range of young children. While it was originally developed and validated for preschoolers with disabilities who were making transitions into kindergarten, it has been used successfully to promote the transition from preschool to kindergarten and from kindergarten to first grade for children with and without special learning needs. The assessment strategies have been used by teachers to move children from special needs classrooms into less restrictive settings and the intervention strategies have been employed to promote the integration

or inclusion of children with special needs into general educational settings. With SLIDE strategies, even children with severe disabilities can learn to become more independent.

Classroom Intervention Strategies: Fostering Independence Skills

The cornerstone of SLIDE are four intervention strategies that have proven successful at improving children's transitions to their next environment. These strategies target skills that are critical to children's independence in early educational settings. These strategies target four areas:

- Fostering Smoother Within-Classroom Transitions
- Providing Opportunities for Practicing Independent Work
- Facilitating Active Engagement During Group Instruction
- Teaching Children How to Self-Assess

Within-Class Transitions. Some of the most difficult times in the classroom day occur between activities: transition times. If children do not know a routine for completing the steps of a transition, such as stopping when they hear a cue, cleaning up, moving to the next activity etc., these times could be potentially troublesome. SLIDE provides intervention strategies that help teachers develop transition routines that allow children to be more independent and classroom time to be used more meaningfully.

Independent Work. Two important skills for young children to learn are task persistence and task completion. Oftentimes, children in early education environments are not given opportunities to practice these skills. SLIDE shows you how to build in opportunities for independent work and finishing tasks using developmentally appropriate activities. In this way, children will be better prepared to attend to and complete tasks in the early elementary grades.

Group Instruction. Almost every teacher spends a part of the day teaching children in groups. Some of the problems that occur during these times are: difficulties in actively engaging the entire group in the discussion, making sure opportunities to talk are evenly distributed, and helping children know when they should respond together or individually. The SLIDE group instruction strategies provide some helpful hints in dealing with these problems and conducting groups in which all children have opportunities to respond in a manner that maximizes their own level of competence.

Self-Assessment. Children who know how to self-assess have the ability to consider their own behavior relative to what's expected. When children have this ability, they can take more responsibility for their actions and change their behavior. Children typically learn to self-assess from the time they are very young. How often have you heard parents asking their toddlers: "Are you still dry"? Children can use this same skill in classrooms to determine for themselves how they are doing and whether they need to change something about their behavior. SLIDE provides

strategies for teaching this important skill to young children and shows how it can be used in ongoing programs or to support implementation of the other SLIDE classroom interventions.

Assessment: Determining Children's Readiness For The Next Setting

SLIDE has two assessment tools to help you determine how prepared children are for the next setting. The first of these, the **Teacher Importance Rating of Classroom Expectations** is a checklist for teachers in the next setting to rate several skills in terms of their importance for success in their classroom. Teachers have different views about what children should be able to do independently, like "cleaning up after an activity", or "understanding and following instructions given to a group." Obtaining this assessment information from a child's next year's teacher can provide data that will be helpful for preparing a child for a specific classroom. Another alternative, however, is obtaining this data from teachers in all the settings possible for the next year for a child or group of children. In this way, either average expectations for the skills measured on this assessment or the range of expectations can be outlined.

The second assessment tool used to determine children's level of preparedness for the next setting is the **Rating of Children's Classroom Independence Skills**. This tool contains a list of skills identical to the one used on the Teacher Importance Rating of Classroom Expectations on which *receiving* teachers rate each skill's importance. *Sending* teachers use the Rating of Children's Classroom Independence Skills to assess individual children's level of performance on that same list of skills. They can then use the data from both instruments to determine how prepared children are to meet the expectations of the next classroom setting. This information can be used to develop instructional objectives for promoting independence for individual children, develop goals for the entire class, and determine which SLIDE intervention strategies can be employed to help children meet those expectations.

Parent Involvement Strategies: Promoting Independence Through Partnership

Parents have an important stake in fostering smooth transitions between settings and promoting their children's independence. SLIDE provides opportunities for parents to be involved in a variety of activities, from providing their own assessment of children's level of independence at home, gathering information about expectations of future settings, and decision-making about transition options.

How Do We Know SLIDE Works?

SLIDE interventions were validated in a large experimental field test. Children who received the interventions in preschool and kindergarten were much less likely than children in a comparison

group to require special education services in first grade. They also had higher teacher ratings on social skills.

What Are Some Of The Other Advantages Of SLIDE

SLIDE has many other advantages:

First, it is not tied to a specific curriculum. Because it emphasizes independence, it fits well with most early childhood philosophies and complements most existing classroom programs.

Second, it facilitates communication and collaboration about children's transitions. Sending teachers, receiving teachers and parents use concrete information about children's performance levels relative to expectations to make decisions about future placements and the types of resources that will be necessary to accommodate children's needs.

Third, it is entirely flexible and its components can be used together or independently.

Fourth, its assessment strategies and interventions can be used for all children--ranging from typically developing to children with severe disabilities.

Fifth, it can be used by an individual teacher or can be adopted by an entire school or district.

Finally, training and technical assistance on all aspects of SLIDE are available through the Juniper Gardens Children's Project.

What's Next?

In the following sections you will find more information on using SLIDE. This manual devotes an entire chapter to each of the four classroom intervention strategies. Each chapter provides activities, implementation considerations, and a means to evaluate the impact of each component. In addition, the chapter, "Planning for Future Transitions" at the end of this manual discusses parent involvement strategies and assessment information. Let SLIDE assist you in providing a more meaningful and productive classroom environment for every child you encounter.

Chapter 1
Classroom Transitions

Overview

Transitions are a necessary part of every school day. A key principle in the organization of developmentally appropriate environments for young children is the scheduling of alternating periods of active and quiet times (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). A transition is any shift in activity that requires students to change locations or materials. In-class transition periods may simply involve movement from one area to another. More complex transitions may include routines such as cleaning up materials or washing hands before snacks. Children may make transitions individually or in groups.

Some preschool and kindergarten students may spend as much as 25% of the school day involved in transitions between activities and locations in the classroom. Although transitions are a necessary part of the school day, the amount of time devoted to these activities should be kept to a minimum. Transitions that are not carefully planned can be very time-consuming and set the occasion for disruptive behaviors. Well-planned transitions provide students with an opportunity to practice independence as they manage materials and move to various areas in the classroom.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers typically rate children's abilities to make smooth transitions without excessive help from the teacher as either "very important" or "essential" for school success. Children are often expected to make a variety of transitions and then perform independently on a task. Making transitions independently can be difficult, especially for children with disabilities or other children who have relied on teacher assistance to change activities.

Because a child who requires excessive supervision during transitions might experience failures in less structured environments, it is important to provide opportunities for children to practice making transitions more independently. Teaching behaviors that facilitate independence during transition time can:

- minimize the amount of down time in the classroom
- provide more time for classroom activities
- decrease the number of behavior problems that might occur during unstructured time

Steps for Facilitating Transitions

This chapter describes steps to facilitate transitions in preschool and early elementary classrooms. These steps have been designed to teach children two major skills required for successful transitions: independence and appropriate behaviors. These steps allow you to:

1. Observe and record student behaviors during problem transitions.
2. Set goals for transitions.
3. Identify expectations during transitions.
4. Evaluate or establish classroom rules.
5. Arrange the environment.
6. Use effective instructions.
7. Scenarios of common transition problems.
8. Monitor and maintain transition behaviors.

Step 1: Observe and Record Student Behaviors During Problem Transitions

You probably know which transitions are problematic in your classrooms. A close examination of these times will help you determine what interferes with smooth transitions. For example, during transitions children might:

- take too long to clean up materials
- require more teacher attention to complete the transition
- talk very loudly or cry
- wander around the room
- become easily distracted by objects in their path
- require someone to lead them to the exact activity area
- wait to be prompted to move to the next area

Does any of this sound familiar? To evaluate your transitions, you can use an observation and recording procedure that identifies what is going well and what needs improvement. Strategies can then be implemented to address specific problems.

Step 1: For two to three consecutive days, observe student behaviors during problem transition period.
Step 2: Record the length of time it takes for children to complete the transition.
Step 3: Identify and record what's going well in your classroom (for both children and adults).
Step 4: Identify and record what needs improvement (for both children and adults). This may involve specific children or the entire class.

A recording sheet such as the Classroom Assessment Form shown in Figure 1 may be used during an observation. One form is needed for each observed transition period (see Form A in the Appendix).

To following scenario illustrates how to use the Classroom Assessment Form:

Mrs. Sanchez has 21 students in her kindergarten class at Julian Elementary School. She is concerned about the length of time it takes the children to make transitions between activities, especially when they are required to pick up or put away materials. For example, each day after centers, she tells the children to clean up and come to large group. This transition often takes ten minutes and sometimes the children become quite loud. Usually, only five or six children actively clean up the materials in the classroom. Some children go directly to the large group area while others wander around. She reprimands children frequently during this transition and often begins the group activity with at least one child in time-out. Even though Mrs. Sanchez cleans much of the room herself in order to save time, the group activities usually begin ten minutes late.

Mrs. Sanchez completed the Classroom Assessment Form as follows:

Classroom Assessment Form

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: Sept. 22

Grade: Kindergarten Starting Time: 10:00

Skill Component: Transitions Ending Time: 10:13

Description of Period or Activity: Cleaning up after center activities and moving to a large group.

What's Going Well:	What Needs Improvement:
Some children are cleaning up and going directly to large group.	Children's voices are too loud.
The children were signaled when to clean up.	5 children did most of the cleaning up.
	John and Sam were shoving, pushing, and wandering around.
	John ended up in time out.
	Children were frequently being reprimanded.
	I cleaned up most of the area.

Figure 1

Teacher Activity 1

Turn to the Appendix and make a copy of Form A, the Classroom Assessment Form. Choose a transition period to observe that is not going as smoothly as you would like. While observing the transition, complete the form and keep it for later use. You will use this information for Teacher Activity 2.

Step 2: Set Goals for Transitions

After transition behaviors are identified, you are ready to set goals for the transition. You should select a goal or goals to address what you see as the major cause(s) or the most significant transition problems in your setting. Typically transition problems are caused by one of the following:

1. Children know what to do, but take too much time.
2. Children are not able to complete tasks independently.
3. Transitions are much simpler than those expected in the next grade level.
4. Adults in the classroom do not know their roles during transitions.

Using the prior scenario, in Figure 2 Mrs. Sanchez established the following goals:

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: Oct. 3

Grade: Kindergarten Activity: Clean-up after centers

Primary problem(s): Takes too long.

Goals

1. To make transition steps clearer to children.
2. To reduce the amount of time in transitions.

Expectations

Teacher Plan	Student Plan

Figure 2

Teacher Activity 2

Find Form B, Goals and Expectations in the Appendix, and make a copy. Describe the primary problem or problems. List goals for the transition period that you chose in Teacher Activity 1. Write a goal for each identified problem.

Step 3: Identify Expectations During Transitions

Teacher expectations vary across classrooms, activities, and often across two teachers in the same classroom. It is important that everyone in the classroom (teachers, children, and other staff members) knows what behaviors are expected during transitions. For example, to make sure that her expectations are clearly understood, Mrs. Sanchez asked the following questions.

- How will the children know when the transition begins and ends?
- Do children understand the term "quiet voices"?
- Are children only expected to put away their own materials or are they also to help other children put away their materials?
- Is it appropriate for children to ask their peers for assistance during the transition? If not, what should children do if they need help?
- What should children do when they finish cleaning up?
- Can the children follow the number of steps in the transition routine?

As Mrs. Sanchez reviews the goals, she begins to identify her expectations for completing the transition routine. Once she outlines her expectations, she translates these to specific steps to be followed by the teacher and by the children. She communicates these steps to the children and begins to establish the routine within the classroom transition. In Figure 3, Mrs. Sanchez lays out a plan for herself as well as a simple routine that she can teach her students.

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: Oct. 3
Grade: Kindergarten Activity: Clean-up
Primary problem(s): Takes too long.

Goals

1. To make transition steps clearer to children.
2. To reduce the amount of time in transitions.

Expectations

1. When signaled, children will stop, look and listen.
2. Children will talk in "quiet" voices while cleaning up.
3. Each child will participate in cleaning up.
4. Children will walk quietly to the large group area when finished..

Teacher Plan	Student Plan
• I will turn classroom lights on/off 3 times, announce clean-up, and note the beginning time of clean-up. • While the children are cleaning, I will praise on-task behavior and children I see working together. • I will encourage children to raise hand if they need help. If a child needs help, I will assist. • I will place bell in central location so that children can ring it when they are finished cleaning up. • After clean-up, I will praise the efforts of the class, and tell them how long it took to clean up.	1. Lights on/off means Stop, Look and Listen. 2. Clean-up your materials. 3. Raise hand if you need help. 4. Ring bell when finished. 5. Walk quietly to group. 6. Sit on mats.

Figure 3

Teacher Activity 3

Using the goals you listed in Teacher Activity 2, list your expectations for the transition period. Also develop a teacher plan and a corresponding student plan that you will teach to your students.

Ideas for teaching a routine:

Appropriate transition behaviors can be taught in several ways:

- Write and post the steps of the routine.
- Post picture prompts of rules and steps of the routine (see example in Illustration 1).
- Role-play examples of appropriate behaviors.

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- Practice the rules and routine steps, individually or as a group, with teacher prompting and feedback.
- Review periodically if needed

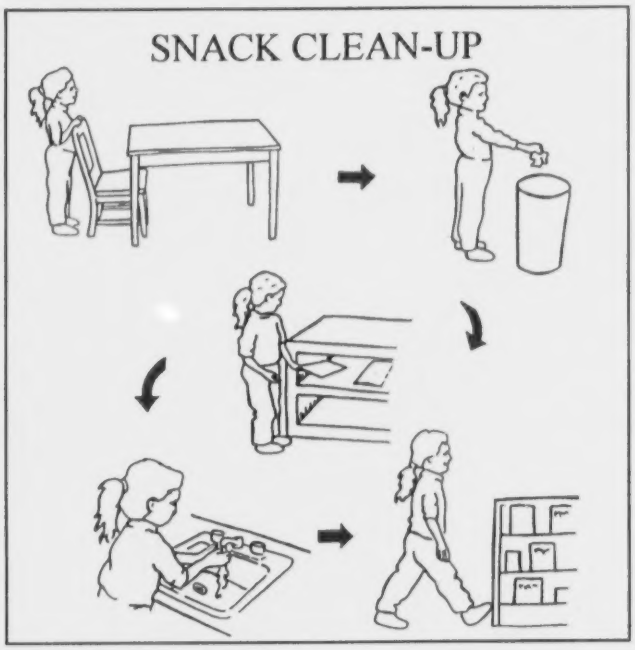

Illustration 1

Step 4: Evaluate or Establish Classroom Rules

In order to eliminate disruptive behavior during transitions, children must be able to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. A good way to establish expectations for acceptable behavior in the classroom is to determine rules that are most important throughout the day. Classroom rules apply to all activities during the day including transitions; however, specific transition-time rules may also be needed. Implementing both sets of rules will increase the overall effectiveness of the transition.

To establish classroom rules that are clear, concrete, and easy to follow, choose three or four rules that are:

1. **Observable**
   - Use rules that can be demonstrated such as "Keep your hands to yourself".
   - Avoid rules that are too general such as "Be nice".

2. **Stated Positively**
   - Use rules such as "It's the teacher's time to talk".
   - Avoid using negatives such as "Don't talk".

If classroom rules have not been taught prior to teaching the transition routine, the rules and transition routine can be taught simultaneously. The same ideas used for teaching the routine can be used for teaching the classroom rules. Classroom rules can be posted and reviewed as needed. An example is shown in Illustration 2.

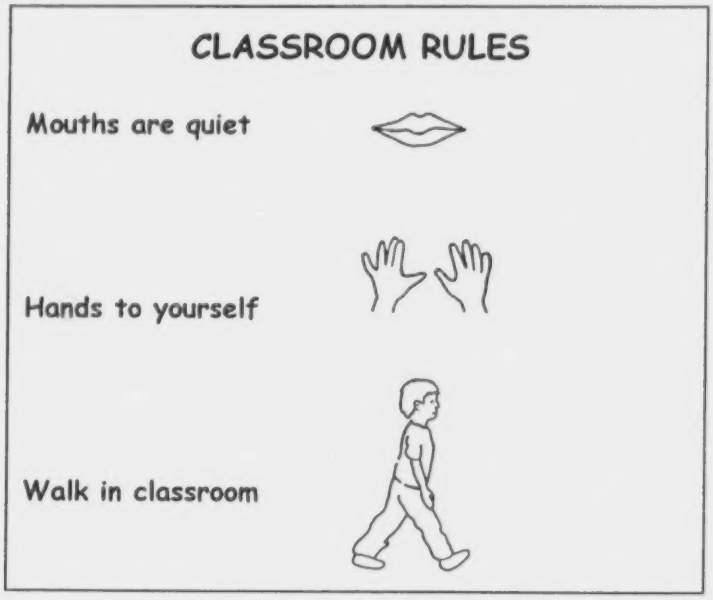

Illustration 2

Teacher Activity 4

Considering the transition you observed in your classroom. Use Form C in the Appendix, Classroom Rules and Environmental Assessment, to list classroom rules that should be established for successful transitions. Design a poster that you can use for teaching these classroom rules.

Step 5: Arrange the Environment

Many transitions can be improved by rearranging the environment. Transitions may vary in the level of difficulty depending upon the number of children making the transition, the number of

steps required during the transition (e.g., putting away materials), and the position of the teacher at the end of the transition. A teacher may wish to make a diagram of the classroom and the different transitions that occur throughout the day. This diagram will help to arrange the classroom environment to facilitate transitions. Arrangements may include:

- Placing materials needed for the transition within the children's reach.
- Moving furniture that may block major trafficways in the classroom.
- Using environmental prompts (e.g., tape arrows on the floor) to indicate areas designated in the transition.
- Placing compatible areas together (e.g., art area near the sink).
- Labeling shelves with words or pictures to help children put things away.

The following scenario is illustrated in the classroom diagram (see Illustration 3):

Before beginning individual art activities, Mrs Sanchez instructs the children to get their box of crayons and scissors from their shelf and find their place at the table. In the illustration below, children leave the circle area and go to their shelves, but find they cannot reach all the necessary materials. Some of the children go back to the circle to ask Mrs. Sanchez for help. One child sees some interesting materials that were not cleaned up at the learning center and goes to that area. Once the children have their materials they go to the table but there are no assigned seats. They begin wandering around the classroom pushing and shoving each other for a seat.

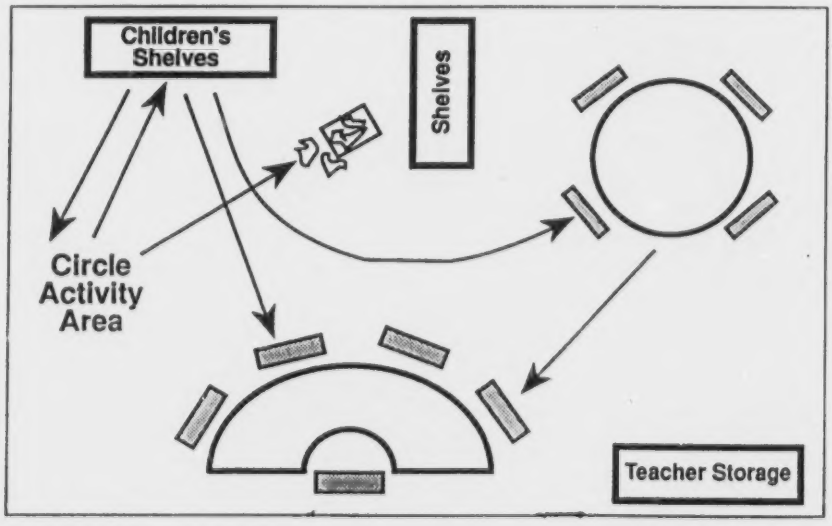

Illustration 3

Now consider the same transition after some simple changes have been made in the classroom environment (see Illustration 4).

After receiving instructions for the transition, children leave the group, get their materials independently, and go directly to their assigned places at the tables. A great deal of classroom traffic was eliminated simply by placing materials within reach of the children, ensuring one activity area was clean before starting a new activity, and clearly designating the endpoint of the transition.

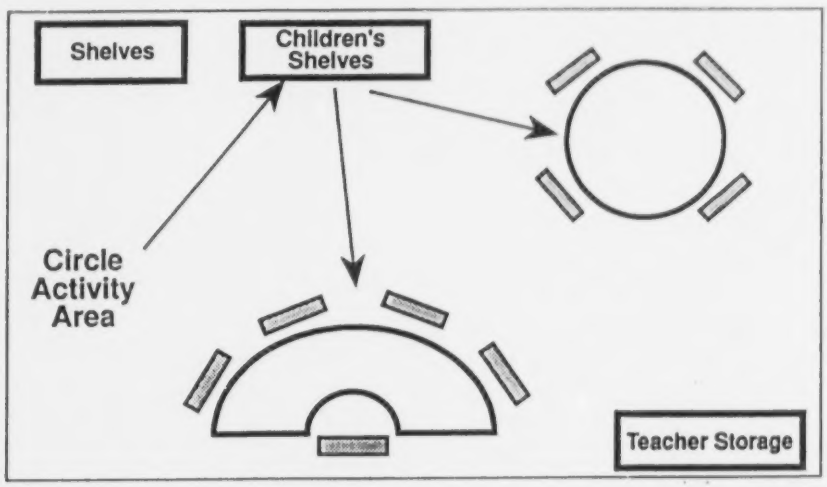

Illustration 4

Teacher Activity 5

Using the Classroom Rules and Environmental Assessment Form (Form C in the Appendix), sketch the environment of the transition observed for Activity 1. What environmental changes can be made to support children in making a smoother transition?

Step 6: Use Effective Instructions

Using effective instructions helps to improve classroom transitions. Effective instructions should stand out from other talk in the classroom and tell children what they are required to do. Teachers generally signal the start of a transition period by providing instruction to the class. These instructions are reminders to children about what comes next, specific tasks to complete, or directions to specific children who may need assistance to complete the transition. Remember that if children are to function independently during transitions, the instructions for transitions must be absolutely clear. The following guidelines are recommendations for you to assist children in this area.

- Instructions should be short and concise. "Freeze when the music stops."
- Instructions should be stated in positive terms and emphasize the expected behavior. For example, "Walk to the table for snacks" rather than, "I don't want to see any running to the snack table."
- Instructions should clearly indicate who needs to respond (i.e., the group or individuals). Walk over to Jan and Taylor, bend down at their eye level and say, "Jan and Taylor, please use your quiet voices," rather than saying to the entire group "You're getting too loud."
- Instructions should direct, not inquire. Don't give children choices unless they really exist. "Josh, I need you to clean-up now," rather than "Would you mind cleaning up the block area?"
- After giving instructions, allow sufficient time for the child to respond before repeating instructions. "Adam put your hands in your lap." (Wait for acknowledgment from Adam of what you have said.) If Adam continues to poke, go to him, bend down, look him in the eye and say, "Adam, please put your hands in your lap." This approach is preferable to "Quit poking him."

Step 7: Scenarios of Common Transition Problems

While oftentimes transitions can be improved by teaching children a routine and rules and arranging the environment, sometimes you may need specific strategies to address transition problems. The strategies described below address the most common types of transition problems.

Problem #1: Children take too much time to complete a transition.

Suggested Strategy: Reducing Time Limits.

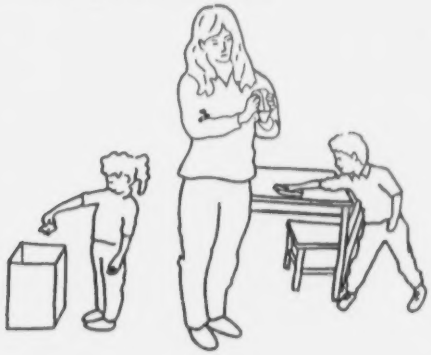

Illustration 5

Reducing time limits (shown in Illustration 5) is most useful when children know what to do, but take a long time to complete the transition. This strategy is especially useful during classroom transitions that include a clean-up period. The following steps may help you to reduce the time it takes to make transitions in your classroom:

1. Determine how much time to allow children initially to complete a transition. Time the transition for several days prior to implementing the new procedure. You might use a kitchen timer to provide the auditory cue. Set realistic time goals that allow children to experience success by beating the timer.

2. Give a clear instruction to the children to stop their activity. This instruction can be verbal or environmental (e.g., turning the lights off and on). When everyone is quiet and facing the teacher, explain how the timer will be used and give an instruction to begin the transition. For example,

> "Today we are going to clean up quickly. Before the timer rings, let's clean up the centers and go to large group."

3. Set the timer for two minutes longer than the average transition period. This is important on the first day so that the children succeed in cleaning up before the timer rings. Remember to praise good behavior. Over the next two or three days, gradually reduce the amount of time children have to clean up until you feel that the transition has become quick, quiet, and efficient. Keep in mind that if the time limit becomes too short, inappropriate behavior may increase.

To keep the children motivated, vary the type of auditory cue. For example, replace the kitchen timer with a music box, recorded music of appropriate duration, or a "rainstick". Another idea is to make a large hourglass-type timer by putting sand inside two liter plastic bottles fastened together at their openings. Any type of timer will provide sufficient motivation for most children, and other incentives will not be needed to obtain the desired results. When the teacher's attention and praise go to the children who "beat the timer," and little or no attention is paid to any stragglers, the strategy is generally very effective. However, if some children persist in straggling during transition, some special incentives such as stickers or stamps might be necessary for facilitating quicker transitions.

Suggested Strategy: Marking the Endpoint.

Illustration 6

Another effective strategy for children who are slow to complete familiar transition routines is marking the endpoint of the transition with a simple but rewarding activity. An example is shown in Illustration 6.

Following are three specific self-rewarding activities for marking the endpoints of a transition:

1. Provide an ink pad and stamp. Children can stamp their hands, their papers, or put a stamp beside their names on a chart. If needed, extend the procedure to include a special classroom privilege for children who earn five stamps.

2. Consider marking the endpoint with an auditory signal by allowing children who complete the transition to hit the hotel bell, play a note on the piano, or tap the windchime.

3. Whisper a "password" to children as they reach the endpoint of a transition. For example, as children leave the playground after outside time, have an adult whisper the password of the day to each individual child. As children come into the classroom for the next activity, they must whisper the password to the attending adult.

"Marking the endpoint" provides an incentive which, when varied and appropriately matched to children's interests, can last all year. It can be used effectively as a single procedure or can be used in combination with the aforementioned strategy of "reducing time limits."

Problem #2: Children are not able to complete tasks independently.

Suggested Strategy: Using Peers as Helpers.

Illustration 7

Classroom peers, in a helping role (shown in Illustration 7), may be able to provide models and prompts for appropriate behavior more consistently than a teacher who must attend to the entire classroom. This strategy is very effective for those children who require too much teacher assistance or attention during classroom transitions. This strategy has been used successfully to teach children to make transitions appropriately between large group and individual work times. It can also be a helpful strategy during clean-up, assigning students who clean up their areas first to be clean-up helpers in other areas.

When using this strategy to teach the class to make transitions from group to individual work, explain that children will be dismissed in pairs, and that each partner should help the other to get to the next activity quickly and quietly. If there are materials to manage, be sure to review these and assign responsibilities ahead of time. Remind children of the classroom rules that apply during this transition, especially with regard to talking, voice levels, and handling others' possessions. Begin by modeling this procedure with a student buddy. Complete the transition and then pair the buddy with another reliable child for a second demonstration.

As with the "reducing time limits" strategy, begin the transition with a clear instruction to the children to stop the activity. When everyone is quiet and facing the teacher, the children are instructed to begin the transition. Children should then be dismissed in pairs for the transition. For example, "Stacey and Danny, please put on your coats and line up to go outside."

"Using peers as helpers" can be very helpful for children with special needs. The success of this strategy depends on how well children are paired together as buddies. Children who need a great deal of help or attention can be paired with the most reliable and attentive children. If one partner has a disability, it may be necessary to provide more specific guidelines for the buddy's duties. Be sure to assign some responsibility to the child who has the disability as well. For example, a child who uses a wheelchair can be responsible for remembering what materials are needed. The buddy's job could be to place materials in the lap of the child. A child with a hearing impairment

can use sign language to help a buddy remember what materials are needed for the next activity. In addition, a child with a visual impairment can remember the materials list and confirm by touch that they have the necessary materials to complete the transition. Remember, it is important to change buddies frequently for children who require a lot of assistance. As children learn to make transitions appropriately, teachers will need to gradually decrease the number of times they are paired with a helper.

Problem #3: Transitions are much simpler than those expected in the next grade level.

Suggested Strategy: Making transitions more complex.

When transitions are smooth and efficient, it may be appropriate for the teacher to analyze what will be expected of children in their next grade level and add those expectations to the routine. Making transitions more complex is a good strategy to use to promote independence and prepare children for success in their next environment. Transitions can be made more complex by:

1. Increasing the Complexity of Teacher Instructions
   Children in some preschool settings may be used to concise, one-step directions and immediate teacher feedback as they perform each step of a transition. For example: "Put your glass on the tray. Good, that's right. Now throw your napkin in the trash. Show me what is next. Great, you remembered to wash your hands."

   In contrast to preschool, many kindergarten teachers tend to use three- or four-step directions. Children are therefore increasingly expected to be responsible for managing their own materials. For example: "Clean-up your snack area, push in your chair, and then sit on your mat for circle time."

   By gradually adding to the complexity of instructions and by requiring children to take more responsibility for managing their own materials, they perform more independently.

2. Reducing Teacher Prompts
   As children become more familiar with new transition routines, you will be able to eliminate some prompts and decrease the number of instructions provided. It is important not to decrease prompts too quickly. Fading teacher directions or environmental prompts too quickly may result in increased inappropriate behavior.

Problem #4: Children don't want to transition to the next activity.

Suggested Strategy: Preparing children in advance for future transitions.

There may be times when children do not want to transition away from activities in which they are

currently engaged, either because they like what they're currently doing, and/or they don't want to participate in the next activity. As a result, behavior problems may occur and transition times can often become chaotic. There are several strategies you can use to help prepare and move children through the transition routine:

1. As you begin the activity, let children know how long the activity will last. You can show children on a poster or schedule, refer to a clock or watch, set a timer to signal the end point, or create a natural ending by establishing quantities such as finishing 2 independent performance tasks, singing 3 songs, etc. A quick review of the transition routine can help children know what to expect.

2. When transition time approaches, give children a warning. You may want to refer back to the clock or timer, or give a special signal or a verbal warning - such as flicking the lights or holding up a 5 minute stop sign.

3. Let children know when they can return back to the activity they don't want to leave. You may want to refer to the daily or weekly schedule so children can visually see what will be happening. If a student or group of students is having particular difficulty with transitioning to a different activity, focusing on a future desirable activity may help to motivate them through the process. Having a visual symbol of that desirable activity may serve as a diversionary tactic to help you move students through the transitioning routine (Hodgdon, 1995).

Problem #5: Adults in the classroom do not know their roles during transitions.

Suggested Strategy: Developing a teachers' master schedule.

Sometimes you may have extra adults in the classroom (such as paraprofessionals, student teachers or volunteers) who do not know how they can assist during transition times. As a result, they are unclear about their roles and do not work together as a team. Teachers can eliminate the confusion by assigning each person to specific duties throughout the classroom day through a **master schedule** (see Hart, 1978; 1982).

By using a master schedule that parallels the children's schedule, adults are assigned to specific activity areas available at any one time in the classroom. Area assignments imply that the teacher or other adult is in the area ahead of time and is ready to structure, assist or interact with children who enter the area. Teachers or adults go to areas to which they are assigned even when no children are present. By doing this, children are more likely to venture to these other areas instead of remaining in the same area for the entire period.

During transition periods, area assignments allow children to move individually, thus reducing the waiting period for all to be seated. For example, in the schedule described in Figure 4, children

are able to make individual transitions from the cubby area, to a specific free play activity, to the bathroom area for clean up and then to movement with supervision from the adults who are assigned to those areas.

Activity	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Enter classroom and transition to free play 9:00 - 9:40	Receive children in cubby area. After they have put their things away, help children select creative or library areas. Then, help with supervision of creative or library areas as needed.	Open creative area and supervise children in your area.	Open library/literacy area. And supervise children in your area.
Transition to movement 9:40 - 9:50	Signal to children that it's time to clean up and go to circle time. Go to large circle area to receive children.	Supervise clean-up of creative area and direct children (as needed) to go to large circle area.	Supervise clean-up of library/literacy area and direct children (as needed) to go to large circle area.
Movement 10:10 - 10:25	Begin movement activities with children who have cleaned up and are sitting in circle.	Join the circle once all the children in your area have cleaned up and are seated.	Join the circle once all the children in your area have clean up and are seated.

Figure 4

As always, it is critical that all teachers and adults know the schedule ahead of time, that they all understand their roles, they are prepared for each assignment, they can communicate with each other during the daily activities, and they can make quick re-assignments when unexpected events occur in the classroom. Planning assignments ahead of time in this way allows you to focus your attention during classroom activities on your most important activity - teaching.

Step 8: Monitor and Maintain Transition Behaviors

Once you have implemented the previously discussed steps, it is important to monitor children's acquisition and maintenance of skills. Initially, children will need to be monitored on a frequent basis to determine if they are learning the skills, or if additional training is needed, and to evaluate whether or not skills are maintained following the use of a specific strategy. A quick check on each child's ability to complete a transition routine may be carried out using the Class Progress Report Form (Form D in the Appendix) such as the example in Figure 5.

Class Progress Report

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Skill Component: Transition Skills School: _____

Starting Time: _____ Date: _____

_____ Ending Time: _____

Description of Period or Activity: Preparation for Circle Time

INSTRUCTIONS: List target children in the classroom in the left column. Record rules and each step of a routine across the top of the form. Observe children during one or more activity periods. For a large group of children, the teacher may need to observe a few children at a time over several days. Record plus (+) or a minus (-) to indicate whether or not children perform each behavior during an observation period.

Child's Name	Rules and Routine (Expected Child Behaviors)					
	Stops current task immediately	Listens for new directions	Walks to area	Works without talking	Raises hand when done	Puts materials away
Leslie	+	-	+	+	+	-
Shantal	-	+	+	+	-	+

General Comments: _____

Figure 5

The number of children completing the transition may determine whether or not you will be able to assess the whole class during a single observation period. For a large group of children, you may need to observe a few children at a time over several days.

Also note that a benefit to this "Class Progress Report" is that it can validate your informal observations of which children are having problems with transitions. If individual children have many "minuses", you might spend time with those children making sure they know the transition routine. If many children have minuses on a specific step in the routine, determine what support they may need to carry out that step. It may also bring to your attention that a child is having a problem which you had not noticed before.

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Eventually you will need to use specific transition strategies only occasionally in the classroom. You might use the "buddy system" when new children enter the classroom or when routines change. You might use the "beat the buzzer" game as a booster session for quick clean-up. A rewarding activity can be inserted at the "endpoint" of complex transitions that are similar to transitions the students will encounter in the next grade.

Variety can be the key to maintaining on-task behaviors during familiar routines. You can have fun experimenting with innovative transition strategies. For example, you can call for an occasional silent transition or permit whispering only. Transitions can be made on tip-toes or with a buddy whose eyes are covered. You might use a buzzer to signal time for a transition, distribute cards with pictorial directions, or give familiar instructions in sign language. Pictures can be used to symbolize transition steps, and objects that reflect the next activity can be displayed.

Appropriate behavior during transitions should not be taken for granted. Your praise for desirable behavior is the best way to maintain transition skills and should be provided throughout the year as children become independent during transitions.

Chapter 2
Independent Performance

Overview

One of the key tasks of early childhood professionals is to help children feel confident about performing and completing challenging tasks (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). This can be difficult for children who have had few opportunities to engage in activities independently. Lack of opportunities can be a particular problem for children with special needs who may have relied on adult assistance to complete tasks. When preparing children for future education settings, it is important to teach them independence skills and provide numerous opportunities for them to practice.

Children enjoy selecting and completing activities on their own, and performing tasks independently can increase their confidence and self-esteem. In fact, this early skill is one that will assist children throughout their school years. Learning to gather needed items, staying on task, asking for help appropriately, and putting materials away when finished are the basic components of performing independently.

Many children develop independent performance skills easily. However, some children need specific instruction. Guidelines for teaching children to maintain on-task behavior during independent performance activities are presented in this chapter. This chapter also provides guidelines for implementing classroom activities and encouraging independence in young children who have diverse abilities and needs.

Steps for Facilitating Independent Activities

Children should have many opportunities to demonstrate independence during a school day. Children can demonstrate independence while engaging in individual activities such as putting together a puzzle, completing a writing task, or reading a book. While children can also practice independence during group times such as clean-up, free play, and transitions to snack time or to the playground, those skills are emphasized in other parts of this manual. The strategies discussed in this chapter focus on teaching independence during a range of activities including fine motor, perceptual, literacy, memory, and problem-solving tasks.

The following preparatory steps for implementing independent activities will be addressed in this chapter:

1. Observe and record student behavior during independent activities.
2. Set goals for independent activities.

3. Select materials and arrange the environment to promote independence.
4. Identify expectations for independent activities.
5. Teach the independent performance routine.
6. Implement independent performance strategies.
7. Scenarios of common independent performance problems.
8. Monitor and maintain independent performance.

Step 1: Observe and Record Behavior During Independent Activities

The first step to teaching independence is to identify the current level of independence demonstrated by the children. By simply stepping back and observing young children during independent activities, you can identify behaviors that are appropriate and those that interfere with independent performance. You might observe whether or not all children:

- find available materials without teacher assistance
- complete their tasks without disturbing others
- complete tasks accurately and in a timely manner without teacher assistance
- ask for assistance according to an established procedure
- clean up materials without teacher assistance

The following example illustrates some of the problems that can occur during an independent activity period in a kindergarten classroom.

> Mr. Clark teaches kindergarten in a public school. He is happy with the social and academic progress of the children. However, he has noticed that many of his students do not work well without his direct supervision. Several of the children are able to work quietly on their own, but some children do not complete simple activities unless he gives frequent feedback. Other children follow him around the room until he comes to see their completed work. Mr. Clark likes the children to be comfortable in his room, and they generally do well at following directions. However, the level of talk during some activities is beginning to interfere with the children's abilities to complete their work within the time allowed. He is becoming concerned that the children will not have the skills they need to work independently in the first grade.

Identifying the current level of children's independence by listing what's going well and what needs improvement during independent activities will provide valuable information. Record these behaviors for 2 or 3 days during a specific independent activity. The same Classroom Assessment

Form described in Chapter 1 can be adapted for recording these observations. Figure 6 is an example of Mr. Clark's completed form.

Classroom Assessment Form

Teacher: Mr. Clark Date: Oct. 5

Grade: Kindergarten Starting Time: 2:10

Skill Component: Indep. Performance Ending Time: 2:30

Description of Period or Activity: Work time

What's Going Well	What Needs Improvement
Some children sit quietly in their seats - AC, CN, DW, DS	Some students don't complete tasks within allotted time period - MT, MR
Children are pretty good at following directions - HD, JA, JS, JC, KB	Some students don't stay in their seats - ME, NC, PB
	Some children need constant feedback - PR, PD
	Paraprofessional provides instruction to children who can do activity independently

Figure 6

Teacher Activity 1

Copy the Classroom Assessment Form (Form A in the Appendix) and choose a time period when many children are engaged in independent activities. Record your observations to identify what's going well and what needs improvement. If it will help you, jot down the initials of the children beside the behavior observed.

Step 2: Set Goals for Independent Activities

As stated in the previous chapter, you can set goals based on your assessment of the current behaviors of your children. Once the goals are set, strategies can be developed to teach the skills that are needed. A possible goal might be to increase student independence during a daily 15 minute activity period. Answering questions like those listed below might help you establish a plan for teaching independence.

- What tasks can the children complete without close teacher supervision?
- Do children have access to the materials required to perform tasks they can do independently?
- Do children have opportunities to complete tasks without teacher guidance?
- Should all the children be involved in independent activities?

Mr. Clark's goals for children in his class might include those listed in Figure 7:

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: Mr. Clark Date: September 12
Grade: Preschool Activity: Independent Perf.

Primary problem(s): Not all of the children help clean up, children are disruptive and are frequently in trouble

Goals

1. Children will learn to locate materials and put them away when finished.
2. Children will learn to complete their assigned tasks independently.
3. Children will increase the amount of time they can work independently.
4. Adults will provide assistance to children only when requested.

Expectations

Teacher Plan	Student Plan

Figure 7

Teacher Activity 2

Using the information from Activity 1 on the Classroom Assessment Form, identify goals for your class using a copy of the Goals and Expectations Form (Form B in the Appendix). Some of the goals may be for everyone, others may be for specific children. Keep your goals few, so they will be manageable.

Step 3: Select Materials and Arrange the Environment to Promote Independence

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Arranging your classroom environment includes selecting, preparing, and organizing appropriate materials and determining how your room is arranged. These can be crucial factors that affect children's abilities to be independent in the classroom.

Select and Prepare Appropriate Materials

Selection of appropriate materials is essential to teaching children independent performance activities. While your classroom schedule will probably reflect many activities that foster children's active exploration, the goal of independent performance is to give them opportunities to practice completing tasks independently (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Therefore, a key consideration in selecting materials is that they have a clear end point. Also, activities that the child is familiar with or knows how to complete will be helpful when choosing independent tasks. These may be activities that you have seen the child complete during center or group time, or the activity may involve skills that the child has used completing other tasks. The following guidelines will assist you in selecting appropriate materials:

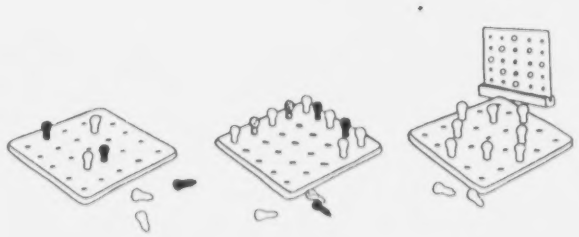
- Use activities that have a specific beginning and end so the child knows when the task is complete.
- Use activities that have a clear, correct outcome.
- Use activities that are familiar to the child, but offer some challenge.
- Use activities that the child can complete correctly without teacher assistance.

Many store-bought and teacher-made manipulative materials can meet these requirements. When choosing materials, it is important to think about the varying range of skills children employ when working with them. For example, pegs and peg boards can be used for tasks that require a wide range of skills. Placing pegs in a board in any order might be very appropriate for a child who is challenged by fine motor tasks. The task will be more complex if the pegs are to be arranged in a straight line or in a border around the peg board. Arranging pegs by color requires classification skills. Duplicating specific peg board designs requires visual discrimination skills in addition to

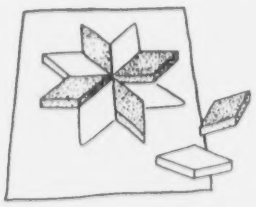
the fine motor skills. Because peg designs range from very simple to complex, children can be familiar with the activity but still be challenged by the task.

Examples of some materials that promote independent tasks include the following and are shown in Illustration 8:

- Objects or cards for:
  - sorting
  - matching
  - classifying
  - patterning
  - sequencing
  - graphing



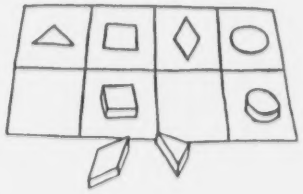
- Manipulatives such as:
  - beads to string
  - zipper and button dolls
  - nuts and bolts
  - shape boxes
  - stacking barrels



- Puzzles

- Visual discrimination materials such as:
  - peg designs
  - parquetry designs
  - bead designs

- Cutting and pasting materials



- Paper and pencil materials for:
  - finding hidden shapes
  - mazes
  - tracing
  - handwriting
  - math skills
  - reading skills

- Computer games

Illustration 8

You might find many uses for the same materials. For example, parquetry pieces can be used for copying a parquetry design, as well as for sorting by color or shape, matching colors or shapes,

counting pieces to match numerals, and creating patterns in a row. You can also create materials such as matching and classification cards made with stickers or pictures from magazines.

Varying tasks across days can increase children's motivation during independent activities. It is important that children learn to independently complete the tasks they do not like, as well as those they prefer. Keeping a record of the types of tasks each child prefers allows you to pair desirable activities with less desirable activities. Including different types of response modes can also increase motivation. For example, one child might categorize cats, dogs, and horses, and then cut out shapes.

By using a wide variety of materials, it is possible to meet the individual needs of the children during independent work. While one child sorts two colors of blocks another might be writing numbers. This flexibility also allows you to choose tasks that your children are able to successfully complete without assistance.

Organize Independent Performance Materials

It is important that the materials for the independent activity period be organized and accessible to the children. Putting the needed materials in a specified location or container can help children find their materials more efficiently. In some classrooms, teachers are able to set out materials for each child on clearly marked shelves or in children's individual bins. Other teachers prefer to put the materials the children need into separate containers such as plastic zip-lock bags, large envelopes, plastic tubs, or shoe boxes. Also, many materials used in preschool and kindergarten programs (such as cards for matching tasks, items for sorting, and parquetry designs) can all be packaged and numbered according to the level of difficulty. For example, tasks can be labeled numerically from simple to more complex, or a color coding system could be used to specify the level of complexity. This type of storage system makes it easier to keep a record of the activities that each child has completed successfully. Choose an approach that fits your classroom situation.

Arrange the Physical Classroom Environment

Arranging the classroom environment to encourage independent performance may involve changing key aspects of the classroom setup, including seating arrangements and the location of materials. Suggestions for establishing an environment that promotes student independence include:

- Use a quiet area in the classroom for independent activities.
- Place materials required for the children's tasks in clearly marked, easily accessible locations.
- Remove all materials that are not required for the tasks from the children's activity space.
- Maintain a consistent seating arrangement.
- Seat children who are easily distracted away from shelves and bulletin boards.

Carefully arranging the classroom environment for independent activities may eliminate many potential problems.

Teacher Activity 4

Turn to the Appendix and make a copy of Form E, Independent Performance Activities. Identify an activity that would be appropriate for independent performance for children at 3 different levels in your class. Describe your system for organizing the materials. Figure 8 provides an example:

Independent Performance Activities

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Describe how your materials will be organized in your classroom for independent activities (e.g., will you organize materials for individual children or arrange materials according to levels?): Materials will be organized and color coded according to children's ability levels. Yellow will signify the most basic level, green the next level, and red will be the most complex.

Materials:	Completion Objective	Suggested Children:
- Unifix cubes (red)	- Patterning	- Ranisha, Maggie
- Ruler and clothespin numberline (green)	- One-to-one correspondence from 1-12	- Nora, Reid
- Tongue depressor Pixie Sticks (yellow)	- Matching	- Kelly, Tammy

Figure 8

Adjust Teacher-Student Interactions

One of the most important procedures in arranging the classroom environment to promote independence is for you to step away from the immediate area in which your children are engaged in activities. Children need the opportunity to complete tasks without ongoing teacher direction. To achieve this, it might be necessary to reduce teacher-child interactions during the independent activity period. If you step away from the area, children also will have an opportunity to learn how to request teacher assistance in appropriate ways, such as raising their hands.

Some children become very dependent on continuous teacher feedback. There are, however, a few simple strategies that you can use.

a. **Step away**. A simple strategy is to move away from the activity area. Initially, you might only step back a few feet, but ideally you should be able to move around the room.

b. **Avoid eye contact**. Some children watch the teacher's face for signs of approval or disapproval, even on tasks that are easy for them. It might be necessary for you to turn away from a child who seeks eye contact until that child becomes more independent.

c. **Monitor the children**. When children are involved in independent activities, you should observe their progress while moving around the classroom. This will give you an opportunity to check that the children can indeed complete the tasks without your assistance. You may also take advantage of naturally occurring opportunities to teach children to request assistance in an appropriate manner.

Select an Appropriate and Consistent Time Period

The techniques used to promote independence can be implemented any time during the classroom routine when all or a few children are engaged in independent activities. It is best to implement independent performance at a consistent time period. You may find that the time you selected is not the best time to focus on independent activities. Careful observation will be important in determining if problems that arise require an adjustment in the time period or more guidance for children.

Step 4: Identify Expectations for Independent Activities

Careful supervision and problem-solving with the group and individual children is essential to successful implementation. During the initial stages of teaching independent performance skills, a good deal of teacher supervision might be required. As the children's independent skills increase, they will be able to complete activities with less teacher assistance. As a result, you will be free to circulate around the room to observe the other children and provide minimal feedback on completed tasks. In addition, as more children learn to work on their own, you may be able to use this time for brief periods of small group or individual instruction.

As with any classroom activity, it is important to establish clear guidelines for independent activities. It is possible that rules for this period will be different than rules for other periods of the day. For example, the seating arrangement might be more structured for an independent activity than for other activities, such as art. The objective of each rule must be stated clearly so

that you, your children, and other staff members know what is expected. For example, if you want your children to work quietly during the independent activity, then it is important to answer the following questions:

- Is quiet talking among children acceptable?
- Must talking be related to the task to be acceptable?
- Are there limits to the amount of talking that is acceptable?

An analysis of the specific behaviors needed for your children to successfully complete the independent activity can help you establish a routine. You might consider the following questions:

1. When and where will task-related instructions be given?
2. Where will the children's materials be located?
3. Will the children carry their own materials to their seats?
4. Will the children need to raise their hand after completing each task?
5. What will the children do with the materials after their work has been checked?
6. What will children who finish their work early do for the remainder of the period?

Once you have developed an independent performance routine, the steps to be followed can be taught in a systematic manner. The amount of time required to teach the routine will depend on the number of children involved in the activity and their current levels of independence. Some children will need more practice learning the routine than others. Some children will learn quickly and may want to be a "helper" to other children. The routine might include the following:

- Watch the teacher so you know what to do.
- Take the materials to your table.
- Work without talking to other children.
- Raise your hand when you finish your work, or have a question.
- Put your materials away.
- Choose a book if you finish early.

Locate the materials. Children must learn how to find the materials they need for the activity. If materials for each child have been arranged on clearly marked shelves, they might go to the shelves to pick up materials for each task. If materials are placed in individual bins, the children can carry their bins to the table and remain in their seats until they are finished.

Teacher Activity 4

Using the Goals and Expectations Form (Form B) from Teacher Activity 2, identify expectations for the children in your class during independent work time, and identify a teacher plan and a student plan to teach an independent activity routine. Keep in mind the goals that you previously

identified on the form. Figure 9 is an example of how Mr. Clark identified expectations and a plan for his classroom.

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: Mr. Clark Date: September 12
Grade: Kindergarten Skill Component: Indep. Perf.

Goals

1. Children will remain seated while engaged in a task.
2. Children will learn to complete their assigned tasks independently.
3. Children will put materials away when finished.

Expectations

1. Children will work quietly during independent work time.
2. Children will raise their hand if they have a question and/or when their work is completed.
3. Children will be able to work quietly at an alternate activity until all the children are finished.

Teacher Plan	Student Plan
• I will review the routine or provide directions before beginning the independent activity. • I will ask children to sit quietly in their seat while engaged in a task. • I will encourage children to raise their hand if they need help or they finish their work. • I will give appropriate feedback. • I will provide an alternate activity for students who finish early.	• Watch the teacher to know what to do. • Take materials to the table. • Stay in seat. • Raise hand if there is a question, help is needed, or work is finished. • Put away materials. • Choose a book if finished early.

Figure 9

Ideally, the children will complete their tasks in approximately the same length of time. In reality, this can be difficult for the teacher to arrange. The above routine includes reading a book for those children who complete their work before the others.

Step 5: Teach the Independent Performance Routine

You can use many strategies to teach children new routines. The strategies discussed below use picture prompts, role playing, and class rehearsal.

- **Picture Prompts**
  You can introduce a new or independent activity using a classroom poster to illustrate the sequence. This sample poster, Illustration 9, shows pictures of children following the routine for the independent activity period.

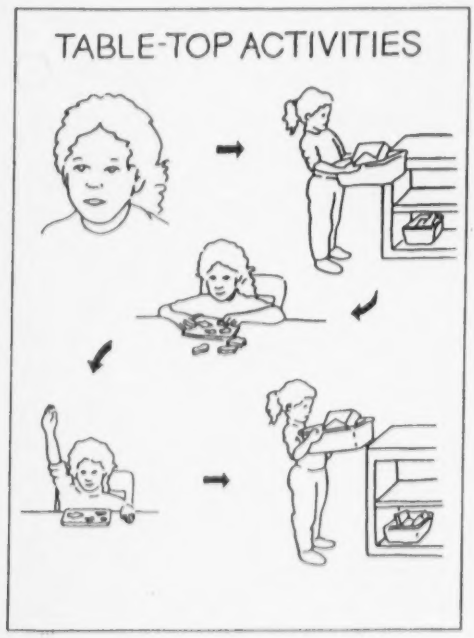


Illustration 9

You can point to each step as you repeat what you saw the child do. By referring to the poster, you will also teach children to use it as a visual guide.

- **Role Playing**
  Role playing is most effective if it includes situations that the children might have questions about. In the following example, the teacher uses role playing to illustrate procedures for a new activity and to teach the following routine: watch the teacher; find your materials and take them to your seat; work without talking; raise your hand when you finish, or if you have a question; and put your materials away when you are finished. The teacher has practiced ahead of time with Amanda, a student in her class who liked the idea of being a model for a

role-playing activity. The teacher has already introduced the procedure using drawings posted in the classroom.

Example of Role-Play:

Teacher: "Today we are going to use our new routine during the table activities. First everyone get your work tubs and sit at your table. Next take out your number 1 packet and complete the activity. When you finish, raise your hand so that I can come see your work. Then, put the activity back in your tub and choose your number 2 packet. When you finish, raise your hand again and I will come check your work. When you are finished, put your tub away and find a book in the reading area."

Teacher: "Amanda is going to practice for us today. Let's all watch to see if she remembers what to do (pointing to the classroom poster). Amanda, remember to:
- Watch me when I tell you what to do.
- Get your materials and take them to you seat.
- Work quietly.
- Raise your hand when you finish, or if you have a question.
- Put your materials away.
- Get a book and sit down in the reading area".

Teacher: "Okay, we're ready to start. Amanda, you may get your materials and take them to your seat."

Amanda: (Takes her tub from the shelf, carries it to her place at the table, and begins to sort beads by color from her number 1 packet.)

Teacher "Everyone, has Amanda remembered to take her tub to the table?"

Everyone: "Yes."

Teacher: "That's right. Is she doing her first task in her tub?"

Everyone: "Yes."

Teacher: "That's right. You are all good listeners today. Amanda, thank you for sorting the beads without talking. Timmy, what should Amanda do when she is finished sorting beads?"

Timmy: "Hold up her hand."

Teacher: "Right, Timmy (pointing to the classroom poster)."

Amanda: (Completes the color sorting task and raises her hand.)

Teacher: "Amanda raised her hand and put all the blues together, and the greens and reds. Great job! Now put this away and get your number 2 packet."

During this role playing exercise, Amanda provided a model for her peers. The teacher used effective instructions and questions to give the entire class opportunities to respond, and she provided feedback to everyone. She also referred to the illustrations of the routine that were posted in the classroom.

- **Class Rehearsal**
  During a class rehearsal, individual children, small groups, or the entire class can practice the independent activity sequence with teacher prompts. It is important for all children to have an opportunity to complete the sequence correctly, even if teacher prompts are required. When class rehearsal is used to practice the entire routine, the procedures are similar to those used for role playing.

  Children can assess their own performance as they practice small segments or the entire routine. For example:

Teacher:	"Everyone, show me how you raise your hand when you finish your work."
Everyone:	(raises their hands)
Teacher:	"Good. Now show me what you do if you have a question."
Most Children:	(raise their hands)
Teacher:	"Great! Almost everyone remembered that you raise your hand if you have a question. Everyone, show me what you do if you have a question."
Everyone:	(raise their hands)
Teacher:	"Right."

Step 6: Implement Independent Performance Procedures

It is important to implement the independent performance procedures immediately after the children have been taught the routine. This gives the children an opportunity to use the skills they have just practiced. There are three basic steps for implementing the independent activity period. These include:

- Review the routine or provide directions before independent performance begins.
- Allow students the opportunity to work independently.
- Give appropriate feedback.

Review the routine or provide directions: If the entire class is involved in the independent activity at the same time, the instructions should be simple enough for all children to follow. Many teachers assign students to small groups during independent performance. If all groups are given instructions at the same time, it is important that the children know when to listen for their group's instructions.

Remember Mr. Clark from our earlier example? He implemented an independent activity period two months ago with his 19 kindergarten children. In the following activity he has grouped the children according to their abilities on several types of activities and provides the same set of independent activities to all the children in a group. This grouping can change as

individual children acquire more skills. He begins by instructing the children who generally have more advanced skills.

Mr. Clark:	"Boys and girls in the Panda group, today your first activity is to practice writing your names, then put the right number of objects in the baskets that are in your bins. You can start now."
Panda Group:	(Children walk quietly to get materials and begin activities.)
Mr. Clark:	"Desmond, thank you for going straight to get your bin (turning to the children remaining in group). You are all waiting so quietly. That's great! Everyone in the Zebra group and the Lion group, now it's your turn. First do the peg design that is in your bin, then cut out the shapes. Remember to raise your hand so that I can see your peg design before you start the cutting activity. You may start now."
Zebra & Lion Groups:	(Children walk quietly to get materials and begin activities.)
Mr. Clark:	"Wonderful! Thank you all for walking to your bins. (Looking to children remaining in group), Everyone who is in the Kangaroo group, raise your hands and look at me."
Kangaroo Group:	(All children raise their hands and face Mr. Clark.)
Mr. Clark:	"You all look ready to listen. That's great! Today you have two kinds of objects to sort. I'm putting all the horses in this cup (points to cup while placing a horse in it) and all the pigs in this cup (points to other cup while placing a pig in it). First you sort your objects, then raise your hand and I will come see what you did. Then you do the puzzle. Remember, walk to get your bin and take it to your table. Sort the objects first. You can start now."

Clearly, the children in this example have learned the routine for the independent activity period. Mr. Clark was able to give academic challenges to Desmond even though he still needs feedback about going directly to his bin, rather than wandering around the room.

Each day Mr. Clark begins with a different group when he gives instructions for the independent performance activity period. Today he decided that he wanted to give specific feedback to the children in the Kangaroo group as they began their tasks, so he gave their instructions last. Mr. Clark was careful to let them know that he appreciated how patiently they waited for their turn. Mr. Clark also checked to be sure that everyone was ready to listen before he modeled the sorting task for them.

Even though the children within each group complete similar tasks, there are many levels of difficulty for these tasks. For example, Desmond might count out objects to put into baskets marked with the numerals 11, 13, and 16, while another child in the same group counts objects to match baskets marked with pictures of 4, 5, and 8 circles.

Allow students to work independently. Children need the opportunity to work without teacher assistance, even if it might take a little longer to complete a task. While children are working, you can walk around the room to observe your children's progress and answer questions.

Give Appropriate Feedback. Although a goal of teaching children to be independent is to decrease the amount of teacher attention they require to complete familiar tasks, it is still important to provide feedback.

More frequent prompts and positive feedback may be necessary during the initial stages of the activity. However, within the first few days it is important to decrease individual prompting. General reminders to the entire class should also be decreased. As soon as possible, the prompts can be reduced to a simple reference to the classroom poster.

- Provide positive feedback for desirable behavior.

Effective positive feedback will include information about the behaviors that are desired. "Lance, thank you for putting all the pegs back into the box." "Karen and Julio, I'm glad you remembered to raise your hands. I will come see your matching as soon as I check Ann's string of beads."

As the children become more independent, your feedback might include more statements to the entire class. "Girls and boys, thank you for being so quiet today during our activities. You were great!"

- Provide instructive feedback for incorrect tasks.

It is important that you provide feedback if children make errors on the tasks they complete during the independent activity period. If the child knows how to complete the task but has made a small error, you might say:

Teacher: (Pointing to correct matches), "Brandon, you matched all these numbers to the right pictures. (Pointing to incorrect matches), Let's see if you can fix these by yourself."
Brandon: (Corrects the errors.)
Teacher: (Pointing to the dinosaurs), "That is right. One, two, three, four. There are four dinosaurs here and this is number '4.'"

If you are confident that a child has simply overlooked an error, you might say: "Dee, look to see if you put all the red beads in one bowl and all the yellow beads in the other bowl. After I look at Jacob's zipper and button task I will check your sorting."

If a child requires ongoing assistance to complete a task correctly, a different task may need to be used for the child during the independent activity period.

- Provide instructive feedback for inappropriate behavior.

The most effective approach to limiting inappropriate behavior is to state what behavior is expected and to provide positive feedback when children exhibit the desired behavior. When this is done consistently, many problems are avoided all together. However, you might need to use other techniques to teach some children to complete tasks independently.

Step 7: Scenarios of Common Independent Performance Problems

When teaching children how to be independent in completing an activity you may encounter problems. This is to be expected, particularly as individual children adjust. Following are some of the independent performance problems you may encounter.

Problem #1: Children have difficulty completing tasks independently.

Even after you have followed all of the suggestions given in this chapter, some children may still have difficulty being independent. They may need the sequence of procedures broken down into smaller steps.

Suggested Strategy: Break tasks down into smaller steps and provide cues for the child to refer to.

To accommodate these children each step of the routine can be illustrated on separate cards. These can be used in addition to, or instead of, the classroom poster. You may also help the children learn the procedure by playing a game. During a group activity, children could sequence the cards according to the steps of the routine. A child who needs extra help to learn the routine might sequence the cards as an activity. Illustration 10 provides an example:

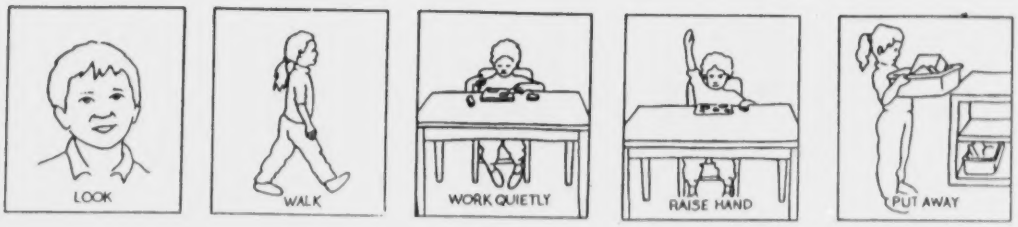


Illustration 10

Problem #2: Children have difficulty learning the classroom rehearsal routine.

The purpose of class rehearsals is to give every child an opportunity to perform independently. However, some children may still have difficulty learning the routine.

Suggested Strategy: Using peer helpers.

Using peers as helpers is one way to provide extra guidance for children without direct assistance from the teacher. Detailed information about this strategy is provided in Chapter 1. If one child would benefit from a peer helper, the teacher might pair other children as well. Thus, one child would not get singled out as needing extra help. Over time the role of peer helpers should be reduced so that everyone has an opportunity to be as independent as possible.

Problem #3: Teachers have difficulty meeting the needs of children with severe multiple disabilities.

Calvin teaches kindergarten. He is very proud that children with various developmental delays have been successful in his class. This year, however, he has a student, Ashley, who has severe multiple disabilities and requires more individual attention than children he has taught in the past. One educational goal for Ashley is that she will increase the use of her right hand and arm. A paraprofessional is assigned to assist Ashley, but Calvin believes that she should learn to be more independent. The problem is that he has not found a task that Ashley can complete without teacher assistance. In addition, Ashley gets upset when she does not have adult attention.

Suggested Strategy: Guided practice skill sessions.

Arm movement is a goal for Ashley, so Calvin might devise an activity in which Ashley pushes sand or corn meal from one end of a tub to a chute in order to fill a container. The paraprofessional might model the activity for Ashley and then step away for a few moments. At

first Ashley might need frequent positive feedback. By gradually increasing the distance between the paraprofessional and Ashley, and the length of time between prompts, Ashley can learn to stay on task for longer periods of time. She will also require less feedback. Many materials could be used for the activity, including rice, small plastic animals and paper confetti. Calvin might vary the tasks by having Ashley push cars down a ramp.

Problem #4: Children get out of seats and go to teacher for help.

Barbara introduced the independent activities routine last week. Each day Ronnie has completed his first task and then walked up to Barbara to ask her to come see his work. On the first day Barbara reminded Ronnie that he should stay in his chair and raise his hand, and then she would check his work. After that first day Barbara ignored Ronnie while giving positive feedback to other children for quietly raising their hands. She also referred to the illustrated list of the rules posted in the classroom and gave general reminders to the entire class. Each day last week Ronnie eventually returned to his seat and raised his hand, but not until he had followed her around the classroom. Barbara has not seen an improvement. In fact, Ronnie followed her for most of the period on Friday. Barbara would like to avoid reprimands because her experience with Ronnie suggests that even though he is compliant immediately after a reprimand, the same problem occurs at the next opportunity.

Suggested Strategy: Close monitoring and reinforcement of "raising hand".

Barbara might monitor Ronnie from a distance and approach his seat as he is about to complete his first task. If she is standing near him, he will have less opportunity to get out of his seat. If he finishes his task and begins to talk to Barbara instead of raising his hand, she might look at him and quietly raise her hand as a model. If Ronnie does not raise his hand she might say the following: "I wonder who will remember to raise their hand?"

If Ronnie still has not raised his hand Barbara might have to be more direct and say the following: "Ronnie, if you are finished, show me how to raise your hand." It might even be necessary for Barbara to gently raise Ronnie's hand for him. Once Ronnie has raised his hand, with or without assistance, it is important for Barbara to give immediate feedback.

"Ronnie, you raised your hand! And I am so glad that you remembered to stay in your chair all by yourself. That is wonderful! Now let's look at your bead design."

Barbara might need to continue walking near Ronnie's table for a few more days, but each day she should stay a little farther away. Before the activity period begins, she might also ask Ronnie to tell the whole class the rules about staying in chairs and raising hands. This will give Barbara an extra opportunity to compliment him for remembering the rules.

Problem #5: Children do not put away a completed activity before beginning another activity.

Meighan goes from one activity to another without completion or clean-up. She seems to have a short attention span. She will take an activity off of the shelf and then go to another shelf to select a new activity. When it is time for clean-up Meighan can have as many as five uncompleted activities sitting on the work table or floor.

Suggested Strategy: Implement an end-point procedure.

Just as marking the end-point was suggested as a strategy for Chapter 1, it can work when teaching children independence in completing activities. Decide on a rewarding activity for the child who is having difficulty completing a chosen activity. For instance, perhaps when Meighan finishes an activity she can stamp a "happy face" on a "Completed Activities" sheet. The first few times Meighan would need guidance to follow this procedure. However, if this is rewarding, she will follow the procedure on her own after a short period of instruction.

Step 8: Monitor and Maintain Independent Performance

The overall goal is to facilitate children's independent performance. The Class Progress Report Form (Form D in the Appendix) might help you monitor your children's independent work time. If off-task behavior begins to increase, or if children are seeking more feedback, you might review the steps for planning and promoting independent performance opportunities that are presented in this chapter. You might find that a particular step needs attention. For example, children might distract others or seek assistance if the tasks are too easy or too difficult. Perhaps the children need to review the rules and the routine. As with other skills, periodic evaluation of the children's progress is important.

Chapter 3
Group Instruction

Overview

While much of the preschool or kindergarten day is spent in individual activities, many activities are conducted in groups, including circle time, story time, sharing time, and some pre-academic activities. With careful planning and implementation, group instruction can be an efficient and effective way to engage children in conversations about their experiences, teach new skills, and review previously covered material.

Too often, however, group activities are organized with teachers doing most of the talking and children just sitting. This type of group activity is neither developmentally appropriate nor conducive to learning. Children need to be actively engaged whether they are working individually or in groups. Active participation on the part of all children not only promotes learning but minimizes off-task behavior.

Teachers sometimes are unaware of strategies for increasing children's engagement in group time. Generally, they choose one of two options: eliminate group time altogether or have groups in which the teacher and not the students are actively engaged. Eliminating groups takes away important opportunities for learning skills such as listening and taking turns, and learning by observing and interacting with peers. The other option, running teacher-dominated groups, occurs all too often as teachers implement group activities (such as circle times) in which children have few opportunities to participate.

It is important to understand that the following approach to group participation would <u>not</u> be used in all group learning activities. In many group times, teachers will want to use more open-ended questions encouraging children to problem-solve, describe their activity, or ask their own questions. During some group times, however, teachers will want to review some points quickly or ensure that many students have several opportunities to respond.

This chapter provides you with strategies for increasing active participation of children with diverse learning needs during group instruction activities. These strategies include:

- arranging an instructional environment that will facilitate group participation
- increasing the opportunities for children to respond individually and in groups
- employing techniques that will maintain on-task behavior and appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses

Steps for Facilitating Group Instruction

In this chapter you will be given guidelines for group instruction that can increase the participation rate of preschool and kindergarten children with diverse abilities. The steps will help you to:

1. Observe and record children's behaviors during group instruction.
2. Set goals for group instruction.
3. Identify expectations for group responding.
4. Evaluate or establish classroom rules.
5. Arrange the environment.
6. Conduct the group.
7. Scenarios of common group instruction problems.
8. Monitor and maintain group instruction behaviors.

Step 1: Observe and Record Children's Behaviors During Group Instruction

As with the procedures for teaching transitions and independent performance, the first step is to assess the current situation. In this case the assessment begins with identifying children's behaviors during group instruction. Because it can be difficult to observe and record while providing instruction, one approach is to take a few minutes directly after a group activity period and write down what went well and what needs improvement. Your assessment will reflect your expectations for the group activity. These expectations will differ depending on the developmental level of the children and the specific situation being assessed. For example, expectations for children's behavior may differ between a group sharing time and a group class dismissal time. You should consider how well children meet the expectations for the situation being observed. For example, a kindergarten teacher might consider whether children:

- Participate in verbal and nonverbal activities (e.g., finger plays).
- Respond to questions.
- Keep their hands to themselves.
- Attend to the activity.
- Sit quietly.
- Raise their hands before talking when they are told to do so.
- Use the expected voice volume.

Children's participation during group activities may vary according to the materials used or the type of expected response. Noting the level of active participation during two or three group activity periods will help you to assess the children's responding skills more accurately.

Remember Mrs. Sanchez from Chapter 1? She observed her student teacher, Michelle, during morning circle time. The following scenario describes some of the problems Michelle encountered.

Michelle conducted a group activity during circle time with 15 children. During this period children sat on the floor in no particular order, and the children who often disrupted the group sat together. The children faced Michelle, but they could also gaze out the classroom door and look into a busy hallway. Michelle started group instruction with a song and then explained that the group was going to play a group color bingo game (see Figure 10). She put out the large bingo game board so all the children could see. Because the color card game pieces were still in the closet, Michelle left the children to get the materials. When she returned, two children were fighting and Michelle spent a few minutes talking with them while the other children waited. When Michelle did begin the activity, she called on individual children to select a color card from the container. After each color was selected, she placed the piece on the board in the correct spot, but she did not draw the group's attention to the color match nor did she ask them to label the color. While the children waited their turns, they looked around and talked with their peers. After ten minutes each child had only a few opportunities to respond. When the activity ended, the children were bored and Michelle was frustrated.

Green	Purple	Orange
Black	Red	Yellow
Blue	White	Brown

Figure 10

In order to discuss group instruction time with Michelle, Mrs. Sanchez used the same Classroom Assessment Form described in Chapters 1 and 2. Together they listed and reviewed behaviors that were going well and behaviors that needed improvement in the classroom (see Figure 11).

Note that needed improvements were defined both by children's behavior and Michelle's behavior. The way in which Michelle lead the group activity influenced children's behavior.

Classroom Assessment Form

Teacher: Michelle Smith Date: Sept. 25
Grade: Kindergarten # Observed: 15
School: _____ Starting Time: 9:00
Skill Component: Group Instruction Ending Time: 9:15

Description of Period or Activity: Group activity during morning circle time.

What Went Well:	What Needs Improvement:
Michelle started group with a song	Children who often disrupt the group were all sitting together
Michelle used visuals	Children could look into busy hallway
Children faced Michelle	While Michelle was getting materials, 2 children began fighting
	Other children had to wait while Michelle disciplined 2 children
	Individual responses limited participation
	Peers talked while others had individual turns
	Children bored, Michelle frustrated
	Children have no assigned seating

Figure 11

Teacher Activity 1

Turn to the Appendix and find the Classroom Assessment Form (Form A). Identify a group time that is not going as smoothly as you would like. As you observe your class, fill out the form.

Step 2: Set Goals for Group Participation

Based on the observation of group time, Michelle and Mrs. Sanchez reviewed the Classroom Assessment Form. After reviewing and discussing the observation, Mrs. Sanchez and Michelle set goals (Figure 12) to implement during the next group instruction time.

Teacher Activity 2

Using the Goals and Expectations Form (Form B in the Appendix), identify and list goals for the group participation period that you identified in Teacher Activity 1. Write a goal for each identified problem behavior or groups of similar behaviors.

Step 3: Describe Expectations for Group Responding

Successful group instruction requires the children's attention and their active participation. It is essential that you and the children know what behaviors are appropriate during this period. There may be special rules that apply only to group activities. For example, a particular seating arrangement might be used. If the children are on the floor, sitting with their legs crossed might be required.

Your expectations can reflect the needs of your students and your own priorities. It is important that your expectations encourage, rather than limit, group participation and that they be developmentally appropriate. Answering the following questions might be helpful:

- What posture is expected?
- What volume and tone of voice is acceptable?
- How long can the children sit and actively participate in large group time?
- How do I want the children to participate during large group time?
- Have I let the children know when and how to respond?
- Do children know when to respond as individuals and when to respond as a group?

Once the expectations have been established, a group responding routine that fits the needs of the children can be developed. Mrs. Sanchez provides an example in Figure 12. In most classrooms some children can respond quickly to questions presented to the entire group, but other children require more time to respond. You can increase all children's opportunities to respond by establishing a special routine that might include a time during which all children think of their answers without saying them.

Posting and reviewing these routines will serve as a useful reminder to children and staff.

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: October 5
Grade: Kindergarten Activity: Large Group Time

Primary problem(s): Children are not remaining seated during group time, and not all of the children are actively participating.

Goals

1. To minimize disruptive behavior.
2. To minimize distractions.
3. To implement varying response modes.

Expectations

1. Children will remain seated during circle time.
2. When signaled, children will look, listen, and wait to respond.
3. All children will participate during group time.

Teacher Plan	Student Plan
I will say:	I will post:
• Look at the materials and listen to my words	• Look
• Think of the answer and keep it to yourself.	• Think
• Get ready	• Wait
• Give the answer when I give the signal	• Everybody answer

Figure 12

It is important for you to develop very clear signals so that the children know:

who should respond
when they should wait
when they should say their answer

Information can be given through hand signals, as well as through the use of verbal cues. Develop signals that are visibly clear and convenient for you to use. For example, you might tell the children to:

1. look by pointing at the materials,
2. point to their head to signal for everyone to "think"
3. hold a hand up to indicate "wait"
4. indicate to the group in a sweeping motion that everyone should give the answer.

Teacher Activity 3

Using the Goals and Expectations Form (Form B) from Teacher Activity 2, identify a teacher plan and a student plan that could be used for the group instruction period. Identify ways you might signal students to think, get ready, and respond as a group.

Step 4: Evaluate or Establish Classroom Rules

In Chapter 1, the importance of implementing classroom rules that are followed throughout the day was discussed. In addition to the general classroom rules, it may be necessary to create rules that are specific to group instruction. After reviewing her goals, Mrs. Sanchez and her class came up with the following rules shown in Figure 13. These may help children understand and remember the expectations that have been identified for group time. Some teachers engage the class in a discussion of rules and ask for their help in identifying rules for group.

Classroom Rules and Environmental Assessment

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: Sept. 27
School: The Learning School Activity: Circle time

Classroom Rules

Circle Time Rules

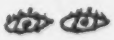
1. Sit in your chair.
2. Use inside voice.
3. Eyes on the teacher. 

Figure 13

Teacher Activity 4

Make a copy of the Classroom Rules and Environmental Assessment Form (Form C in the Appendix), and identify rules for the group time that you identified in Teacher Activity 1. You may want to post these rules near the activity so students remember what is expected.

Step 5: Arrange the Environment

Many potential problems may be eliminated by carefully arranging the classroom so that group activities occur in an area relatively free from distractions. Environmental arrangements will vary greatly depending on the developmental level of the group. If some children are disruptive during group time, consider the following guidelines:

- Sit in front of the least distracting area in the classroom.
- Arrange mats, name cards, or chairs in a semicircle. It may be necessary to have a second semicircle behind the first, or a second row of chairs.
- Seat the children facing the teacher.
- If using chairs, make sure that children's feet can rest flat on the floor, or use an adaptive device.
- Seat the children who tend to be disruptive within reach of the teacher, and or between children who tend to be well-behaved.
- Seat children who are easily distracted away from materials, shelves, and bulletin boards.
- Keep a consistent seating arrangement from day to day. This arrangement might change a few times throughout the year. As an occasional reward, allow the children to choose where to sit.

Teacher Activity 5

Consider the group time that you observed in Teacher Activity 1. Sketch out your classroom environment on the environmental assessment portion of the form, including an effective seating arrangement for the children. List the environmental changes that you might like to make to support effective group instruction.

Select and Prepare Appropriate Materials

Group instruction procedures can be used to introduce new material or to review previously covered material. Learning activities most appropriate for group instruction range from classifying items like colors, foods, or animals to making a simple recipe such as play dough. Curriculum materials can include manipulatives, games, magazines, flannel boards, tapes or books.

When planning group instruction time, it is important to select an activity that incorporates a variety of skills. For example, a theme on gardening may include the activity planting seeds. By exploring the dirt, children can review information from a past lesson on senses using touch, sight, and smell. By exploring the seeds, children can work on colors, sorting by size, and counting the seeds to work on numeration skills. By planting the seeds, children can continue to learn about what makes things grow as well as learning more about our natural resources such as water and sunshine. Notice that one activity as simple as planting seeds can address a number of developmentally appropriate skills.

Mrs. Sanchez introduced the gardening activity in her classroom and completed the Group Instruction Planning Form (see Figure 14):

Group Instruction Planning

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: October 10
School: The Learning School Grade: Pre-K

Activity/Theme: Gardening, planting seeds

Skills to Address:	Materials Needed:
• Exploring using touch, sight, and smell • recognition of colors • sorting by size • counting • learning about planting and growth • understanding natural resources (e.g., water and sunshine)	• assortment of seeds and packets • containers for planting • dirt • water

Response Modes and Tasks:

Figure 14

It is important to prepare for group activities in advance. If materials are ready for use, the teacher is free to attend to the children, thus minimizing disruptive behavior.

Teacher Activity 6

Choose a theme on a specific activity that you might teach during group instruction. Copy the Group Instruction Planning Form (Form F in the Appendix) and list the skills that you will address during the activity and identify the materials needed for teaching these skills.

Select An Appropriate and Consistent Time Period

Group instruction techniques can be introduced into any existing classroom routine that involves small or large group activities. It is not necessary to set aside long periods of time for group instruction. In fact, planning a few 5 to 10 minute periods throughout the day for group instruction can be helpful. Typically, group instruction techniques are used during planned activities, but teachers might use the techniques at other times as well. For example, while waiting for the bus, the teacher can review what the children are about to see on a field trip.

Step 6: Conduct The Group

Effective group instruction can maximize children's participation by increasing opportunities for both individual and group responding. The following procedures can be used for carrying out group activities:

- Teach the group responding routine
- Increase opportunities for children's responses
- Use effective instructions
- Use effective models
- Allow sufficient time for children to respond
- Include both group and individual responses
- Use varied tasks and response modes
- Provide appropriate feedback
- End with a correct response

Teach the Group Responding Routine

When teaching the group responding routine children need practice and feedback to learn when to respond as a group and when to wait their turn. Some teachers find that the game "Simon Says" provides a useful signal for responding.

Teacher: "Everybody, look at this color. Simon says, 'Say red'."
Children: "Red."
Teacher: "That's right, this is red."

As mentioned earlier, a visual signal might help children know when it is time to respond. A signal helps those children who answer quickly to learn to wait while other children think of the answer. As the children become more proficient, the teacher can decrease the number of signals, such as the pay-attention signal before each item. The following guidelines for teaching the routine may be useful.

- Tell children what they are going to do. "Sometimes we are going to answer together, and sometimes I will call one girl or boy to answer. Listen to what I say."
- Give the signal to pay attention. "Everybody, look at my eyes."
- Praise those children who look and wait. "Nathan, thank you for looking. Maria, nice waiting."
- Hold up materials related to the instruction.
- Give the signal to think of the answer without saying it. While giving the wait signal, say, "Get ready with your answer." Then indicate to the children who is expected to respond. "This squirrel is going up the tree. Everybody, get ready. Tell me which way the squirrel is going?"
- Praise children for answering correctly and waiting quietly. "Good job boys and girls! The squirrel is going up."
- Review the signals as needed.

A classroom chart that illustrates the signals for the expected behaviors might help some children learn the group responding routine. After the children are familiar with the routine, the chart can serve as a visual prompt. When the routine is established, it will be simple to give children many opportunities to respond during group activities.

Increase Opportunities for Children's Responses

Responding refers to the manner in which the students are directed to answer a question or complete an instruction. Children should be encouraged to respond in many different ways. The more variations, the greater the possibilities of student engagement. Once given a clear instruction, cue, or signal regarding how and when to respond, students can respond in any of the following manners:

- **Oral Response** - unison, partial group, or individually
- **Gestural Response** - raise hand, thumb up-down, shake head, raise appropriate flashcard, clap, stand, sit, write in the air, sign, etc.

- **Written Response** - paper, chalkboard, individual writing slates, worksheet, overhead, etc. You can engage all children in an activity by using fast-paced group instruction techniques that give children many opportunities to respond. Alternating between a few group responses and a few individual responses is one approach. If new material is being presented, you might have children repeat answers that have just been modeled.

Remember to keep the materials and response modes developmentally and individually appropriate and let children know what is expected. Clear instructions can improve children's compliance and increase group participation. Guidelines for clear instructions include the following:

- **Be concise.**

  "Brian, name this color."

  Example:
  "Niki, would you like to come up front to the flannel board and show all the girls and boys the jack-o-lantern that has a face that looks happy?"

  There are two problems with this question. First, it implies that Niki has a choice in whether or not she comes to the board. This may not be what the teacher intended. If Niki says "no," is she being noncompliant or simply making her choice? In addition, the question has unnecessary language. Niki might not be able to interpret what is expected. A better instruction would be: "Niki, come to the board and point to the jack-o-lantern that looks happy."

- **Indicate who is expected to respond prior to the instruction.**

  "Aaron, name this animal," or Everybody, let's count and clap," rather that "Name this animal," or "Let's count and clap."

- **Give instructions in positive terms.**

  "Kathy, put your hands in your lap," rather than, "Kathy, don't play with your neighbor's hair!"

- **Provide a model when appropriate.**

  "Kelly, this is an airplane. Say 'airplane'."

- **Use a question only if it calls for an answer, or if the child actually has a choice.**

"Arnie, what letter is this?" rather than, "Arnie, would you like to tell me what letter this is?".

> Example :
> "Marshall, all the students need cards, and you are the special helper for today. What do you think you would like to do about that?"
>
> If the teacher intended to simply tell Marshall to pass out the cards, the instruction should be specific. "Marshall, please pass out the cards to everyone." If, however, the teacher also intended this to be a teaching activity for Marshall, it should be clear that he is expected to identify his task. "Marshall, you are the helper today. Tell me what you should do first."

Teacher Activity 7

Use the guidelines for effective instructions to improve the following examples:

"David, why don't you get the box of picture cards and go around the circle and give everybody one of the cards."

"What number is this? Mary do you want to tell me?"

"I told you not to swing your legs, Lena!"

"Anita, how would you like to come put a snowflake on our weather chart today?"

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Use Effective Models

It is important to make a distinction between group times in which you want to review concepts efficiently, maximizing the responses of everyone in the group, and those group times that may involve active problem solving and discussion by the group. The guidelines in the section pertain to efficient, teacher-led instruction. In addition to verbal instructions, it is often useful to model the correct response when presenting materials that the children have not completely mastered. The models included within these group instruction procedures are intended to insure many opportunities for correct responding. These procedures are not meant to assess each child's knowledge and skill level. Like good instructions, good models should be concise and easy to follow. For example: "Everybody, this is a tambourine. Say 'tambourine.'" "Katrina, look at the red shoes. What color are the shoes?"

There is, however, a distinction between concise and incomplete. Partial models sometimes result in the children giving incorrect responses. Consider the problem with the following example:

Teacher: (pointing to March on the calendar): "Who knows what month it is?"
Group: (There is no response.)
Teacher: "It is Mmm..." (Teacher says the beginning consonant and vowel sound of the word.)
Group: "May".

In using this partial model the children did not answer correctly, but instead practiced an incorrect response. Consider the same example delivered in a way that the teacher provides specific information.

Teacher: (point to the calendar): "Everybody, we're starting a new month today. It is March. Say 'March'".
Group: "March."
Teacher: "Very good! You all said 'March.' Hope, what month is it?"
Hope: "March."
Teacher: "Right, Hope, it is March." (pointing to last month) "Everybody, last month was February. What month was it last month?"
Group: "February."
Teacher: "Right, it was February." (pointing to this month) "Remember what this month is? Everybody, what month is it?"
Group: "March."
Teacher: "Excellent! It is March."

In this example, the teacher gave a model so the children could answer correctly. She also gave them several opportunities to respond to "March". Mixing the calendar month with another month was important so the children could actually look at the visuals, rather than simply saying the word "March" without relating it to the calendar month. At the end of the example, the

teacher asked for the label "March," without a model, to check if the children remembered. If some children would have given an incorrect answer, the teacher should repeat the procedure of teaching recognition of the picture.

Allow Sufficient Time for Children to Respond

Even though a fast-paced teaching style generally limits the amount of down time during group instruction, children need adequate time to respond before the teacher gives additional prompts. We know from research that giving children 5 seconds to respond, rather than 1 second, generally results in more attempts to respond and a higher percentage of correct answers. Sometimes it is difficult to wait for children to respond, but it is important that **all** children have the opportunity to respond during group time.

Include Both Group and Individual Responses

In the teaching example on the previous page, the teacher gave opportunities for group response when teaching calendar skills. In addition, an individual turn was given to Hope to check her ability to respond. For a teaching response, the teacher could say "Everybody, this is March. Hope, say 'March'." The teacher could also pair for an individual response, "Hope and Eric, what month is this?" This is especially a good technique to use when you want to give particular children extra opportunities to respond.

Use Varied Tasks and Response Modes

One way to increase group participation and keep the children's interest is to vary tasks and response modes. Mixing verbal and nonverbal responses and using a variety of materials to teach one concept are simple strategies. Another approach is to cover several concepts with the same materials.

Example:

Mrs. Sanchez: (Holding a packet of seeds with red flowers) "Everybody, get ready. What color are these flowers?"

Group: "Red."

Mrs. Sanchez: "Good job! Yan Min, find a packet of seeds with orange flowers."

Mrs. Sanchez "That's right, Yan Min!" (Pointing to the orange flowers) "Everybody, get ready. What color are these flowers?"

Group: "Orange."

Mrs. Sanchez: "Wow! You are all doing a great job." (Showing 2 varieties of seeds) "Everybody, get ready. Which seeds are bigger, the seeds in the bowl or the cup?"

Group: "The seeds in the bowl are bigger."

Mrs. Sanchez: "Yes! Johnny, go to the bowl of bigger seeds and count out 10 seeds."

Mrs. Sanchez: "Great job Johnny!" (Pointing to the seeds) "Everybody, get ready. Let's all count these seeds together." (Signal to begin.)

Group: "1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10."

Mrs. Sanchez: "Right. There are 10 seeds. You all are counting so well! Anthony and Barb, find one yellow flower packet and one blue flower packet and put them in baskets that match."

Anthony & Barb: (Locate a yellow packet and a blue packet, and place them in matching baskets)

Mrs. Sanchez "Good listening, Anthony and Barb. Carita and Paul, feel these seeds and tell the class which one is hard and which one is soft."

During this activity children identified colors, matched the seeds to baskets of the same color, counted, and identified big and small and hard and soft. The complexity of the children's tasks matched their individual skill levels. Mrs. Sanchez also gave them the opportunity to give verbal and motor responses, modeled correct answers, and provided many opportunities to practice. Mrs. Sanchez identified the following response modes and students' tasks on the Group Instruction Planning Form in Figure 15.

Group Instruction Planning

Teacher: Mrs. Sanchez Date: October 10
School: The Learning School Grade: Pre-K

Activity/Theme: Gardening, planting seeds

Skills to Address:	Materials Needed:
• Exploring using touch, sight, and smell • recognition of colors • sorting by size • counting • learning about planting and growth • understanding natural resources (e.g., water and sunshine)	• assortment of seeds and packets • colored baskets • containers for planting • dirt • water

Response Modes and Tasks:

Response Modes:
- verbal
- non-verbal
- motor
- modeling

Tasks:	Target Child(ren):
• identifying colors	Yan Min
• counting	Johnny
• matching colors	Anthony & Barb
• identifying big and small	Group
• identifying hard and soft	Carita & Paul

Figure 15

Teacher Activity 8

Consider various response modes that you have used with children in your classroom. On the Group Instruction Planning Form (Form F) that you used for Teacher Activity 6, list several ways that you might vary the activity tasks and response modes to increase participation of children in your classroom.

Provide Appropriate Feedback

Providing feedback to children for correct and incorrect responses is an important step in increasing group participation.

Feedback for correct response. At times when the pace is fast and the students are answering correctly, a simple "Yes!" or "Great!" is sufficient after each response. At other times descriptive praise can be used. Praise can be directed to the entire group or to individual children. Praise can relate to the specific response given or to other observed behaviors. Examples of descriptive praise include:

"That's right, this is blue."
"Great, Juan, you found the biggest block."
"Good job, everyone waited until I pointed to the picture."

Feedback for incorrect responses. It is important to provide corrective feedback when children respond incorrectly. Depending on how it is approached, feedback can have a positive or negative effect on group participation.

When giving feedback remember to:

- Use the feedback to instruct rather than to show disapproval.
- State the correct answer and avoid repeating the incorrect response.
- If most children give the correct answer, but one does not, repeat the correct answer and repeat the question immediately.
- If several children give an incorrect group answer, provide the correct answer and then repeat the question immediately.

Step 7: Scenarios of Common Group Instruction Problems

Problem #1: Inappropriate behavior during group time.

Suggested Strategy: Ignoring as a feedback tool for undesirable behavior.

Ignoring is a procedure that can be used for changing undesirable behavior. Ignoring inappropriate behavior is especially helpful when the teacher has the opportunity to recognize other children who show the desired behavior. This recognition does not have to be exaggerated.

Many times a simple statement of appreciation to another child delivers the message. "Shannon, thank you for keeping your hands in your lap."

Suggested Strategy: Dividing children into smaller groups.

Another strategy for managing inappropriate behavior during group time is to divide children in your classroom into smaller groups. This strategy can be effective if there is another adult in the classroom to work with or supervise the other children. With smaller groups, more positive attention can be given to individual children who may be disruptive during group time. In addition, the seating arrangement and the group makeup can be considered.

Problem #2: Children with limited language.

Suggested Strategy: Promote active participation by adapting response modes.

Children who have limited language skills can also learn to respond with the group. For some children, a "signed" response is appropriate (as with American Sign Language). Teachers can also call for motor responses during group activities. For example:

Mrs. Sanchez:	(Pointing to Panda) "Boys and girls, Panda wants to play outside today. Put your hands up if you think he should wear a coat."
Group:	(Put hands up)
Mrs. Sanchez	"I agree with you. I think Panda should wear a coat. Sandy, come put the coat on Panda."
Sandy:	(Puts coat on flannel board character)
Mrs. Sanchez:	"Thank you Sandy. That will keep Panda's arms warm. Everyone, touch your arms."
Group:	(Touches arms)
Mrs. Sanchez:	"That's right. (Pointing to Panda) I think Panda should also wear something on his head. Everyone, put your hands on your head."
Group:	(Put hands on head)
Mrs. Sanchez	"Good. Now, everyone, get ready to tell me what Panda should wear on his head. Panda should wear a ...(Gives hand signal to respond)."
Group:	"Hat."
Mrs. Sanchez:	"Very good! He should wear a hat. George, come put the hat on Panda's head."

In this lesson, Mrs. Sanchez gave all the children opportunities to give both verbal and motor responses. She will continue the lesson with three children taking a turn to put on Panda's mittens and neck scarf. After Mrs. Sanchez and the children make up an entertaining story about

what Panda did when he went outside to play in the snow, the children will have more opportunities to label and point to body parts, and the children who did not get to dress Panda, will have an opportunity to help Panda take off his outside clothes.

Mrs. Sanchez no longer uses a verbal signal to tell the children when it is time to respond as a group. She has taught the children to attend to a hand gesture.

Problem #3: Children who take a long time to respond.

Suggested Strategy: Adapt response modes in the classroom.

When there is an opportunity to choose items or when individual motor responses are required, some children may take considerable time to respond. If this occurs, you must be prepared to engage the group. In this case you have a couple of choices. First, you can ask the child if he wants to choose a friend to help and then repeat the request and ask both children to provide the answer. Second, if you ask for a motor response, you can give the child more time while asking for a verbal response from the group.

Step 8: Monitor and Maintain Group Instruction Behaviors

In this chapter we discussed ways of maintaining active participation during group instruction periods. A copy of the same Class Progress Report Form (Form D in the Appendix) used in Chapters 1 and 2, may also be used to monitor children's behavior during group instruction. However, during group responding activities it would be difficult to observe and conduct the activity at the same time. You may want to ask another adult to complete the Report Form.

If active participation begins to decline, or if some children are not following the established routine, review the steps discussed in this chapter. For example, look at the type of materials and instructions (Step 5) that are used during the group activity, and determine if the children are allowed frequent opportunities to respond. By looking at each step of the group instruction procedure, it may become obvious that a particular step needs help or improvement. Ongoing assessment of the children's participation during group activities can be helpful.

To summarize the steps which were covered to facilitate responding during group instruction, let us revisit Michelle's preschool classroom.

Example:
Michelle has been implementing group participation strategies all year during her daily circle time activity. During circle time the children sit on the floor in assigned places in a semicircle, with the most disruptive children seated next to Michelle. While facing the children, Michelle begins the period with a song. While reaching for the materials that are on the floor behind her, she tells the children that they are going to play the color bingo game. She begins by instructing individual children to select a color card from the container and label it. She follows their correct responses with prompts to the group and to individuals to repeat the name of the color. After several colored flannel pieces are on the board, Michelle instructs the class to tell her which color has the most flannel pieces on the board. Michelle continues to mix requests for group and individual responses. Throughout the period she provides models when needed. She also praises children for correct answers and for attending to the lesson. After ten minutes, she ends the group activity with a correct answer. Each child has had many opportunities to respond individually and with the group. Michelle takes the color pieces off the flannel board while she leads the children in a familiar song.

Chapter 4
Self-Assessment Skills

Overview

Children who learn self-assessment skills are taught to identify expected behaviors, compare their behaviors to those expectations, and make any necessary changes in their behavior. As children learn self-assessment skills, they are able to take more responsibility for managing their own behavior and demonstrate self-control or self-regulation. The extent to which children demonstrate self-control directly affects your role in the classroom and will allow you to have more time to teach.

The ability to self-assess is an important skill. For example, young children let parents and teachers know when they are hungry or when they are bored. Self-assessment skills can be used as an effective tool for teaching skills such as those described in the three previous chapters. For instance, it has been demonstrated that self-assessment can be used to teach preschool children with and without special needs to complete tasks independently. Individual children assess whether they have completed each of the steps involved in independent work and then match their assessments with the teacher's. Children's behavior during transitions also has been demonstrated to improve when, as a group, they compared their assessments of their transition behaviors with those of the teacher's.

Children who control their own behavior possess an important social skill that will help them be more successful in future educational programs. However, many children need to be taught how to monitor and evaluate their behavior. As an example, Mrs. Sanchez noticed that some children in her class no longer clean up after snack time. As a strategy to assist her students, she made a poster of the clean-up routine. As she uses the poster to review the steps of the routine, she asks the children to raise their hand if they completed the steps. By reviewing the steps, students can assess whether or not they completed the clean-up routine, they can practice self-assessment, Mrs. Sanchez can identify which children are not cleaning up, and children have an opportunity to change their behavior if needed.

This chapter provides guidelines for teaching children in preschool and early elementary classrooms to assess their own behavior. Recommendations for using self-assessment as a teaching tool are provided.

Steps to Facilitating Student Self-Assessment

Self-assessment strategies are useful in reminding children about the tasks they should do and for helping them become aware of whether or not they did them. For example, each day after center time, the teacher asks students to clean up their materials and then go sit in the circle area for

music. Rachael frequently does not help clean up and wanders around the room. The teacher might give Rachael a clean-up picture card illustrating the desired tasks and ask her to mark on the card each day whether or not she cleaned up. The card will provide Rachael with a reminder of what she needs to do, and it will also give her an opportunity to self-assess whether or not she did the desired task.

The following preparatory steps for implementing self-assessment skills will be addressed in this chapter:

1. Assess students' current self-assessment skills.
2. Set goals for self-assessment.
3. Identify expectations for self-assessment.
4. Teach self-assessment.
5. Monitor and maintain self-assessment.

Step 1: Assess Students' Current Self-Assessment Skills

You can evaluate children's self-assessment skills by having them report on their behavior(s) as a group. Children might not understand what is expected the first time you instruct them to assess their own behavior. Therefore, it is better to evaluate children's self-assessment skills after providing assessment opportunities for several days.

It is easier for children to report on what they are currently doing then on behaviors performed earlier. It may also be easier for children to report on behaviors performed earlier then on behaviors that have not occurred. As the request becomes more difficult you may begin to see a variation in children's responses.

Children's accuracy in assessing their own behaviors depends a great deal on the type of behavior they are asked to assess. The easiest type of behavior to assess is typically one in which the children are currently engaged.

- "Put your hands up if you are sitting on the floor."

The next level of difficulty includes self-assessment in which children report on behaviors which they performed earlier.

- (After the children have eaten apples for snacks), "Put thumbs up if you ate apple pieces for snack today".

Even more challenging is asking children to report on behaviors that have not occurred.

- (Before the children have sung a song with the teacher), "Put thumbs up if you sang a song with me this morning".

The most challenging situation for children to accurately self-assess requires children to report on behaviors which were performed earlier by some, but not all the children.

- (Having noted which children did and did not play in the sandbox), "Raise your hand if you played in the sandbox today".

When you instruct children to assess their own behavior, there are four types of responses that might occur as shown in Illustration 11:

Example: "Hands up if you are sitting on the floor."

1. The child demonstrated the behavior and makes an accurate self-assessment.

2. The child demonstrated the behavior but does not make an accurate self-assessment.

3. The child did not demonstrate the behavior but makes an accurate self-assessment that it did not occur.

4. The child did not demonstrate the behavior and does not make an accurate self-assessment.

Illustration 11

Teacher Activity 1

Using the Self-Assessment Form in the Appendix (Form G), identify an activity period in which you would like to teach self-assessment skills to your children. Over a two or three day period ask them to practice self-assessment. Write statements that instruct children to assess their own performance on behaviors relevant to the activity period. Use behaviors that do not imply correctness or incorrectness such as following rules. Make a note of children who have difficulty with this activity. You may then want to practice with individual children who you noted as having problems self-assessing. It may be that a child who was unable to assess accurately in a group can do so when requested individually. An example of a completed form is shown in Figure 16.

Self-Assessment Form

Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Grade: _____ Starting Time: _____
Skill Component: _____ Ending Time: _____

Description of Activity Period: After the circle time good morning song

Self-Assessment Instructions	Children with Difficulty
1. "Everyone who is sitting, raise your hands." (Recall of a behavior performed now.)	KD, MT
2. "If you sang our good morning song today, put your thumbs up." (Recall of a behavior that happened earlier in the day.")	KD, MT, RC, DN
3. "Put your hands up if you played at the water table today." (A behavior of something that has not yet happened.)	KD, MT, RC, DN, MR, SJ
4. "Put your elbows in the air if you played with puzzles this morning." (A behavior that some engaged in and others did not.)	KD, MT, RC, SJ, DG, IP

Figure 16

Step 2: Set Goals for Self-Assessment

Goals can be set based on the children's current abilities to assess their own behavior accurately. One goal might be to teach children to assess their behavior accurately when they are not all engaged in the same behaviors. Another goal might be to teach children to assess behaviors that are related to classroom rules.

Referring to your notes from Activity 1, ask yourself questions like the following:

1. Do children accurately assess their current behavior?
2. Do children accurately assess behaviors that occurred earlier?
3. Do children accurately assess their behavior when they are not all engaged in the same behavior?
4. Do children accurately assess their behavior when the behaviors are related to classroom rules?

Answers to these questions should help you to set goals for teaching self-assessment skills.

Teacher Activity 2

Copy the Self-Assessment Goals and Expectations Form in the Appendix (Form H), and as you refer to the observations you made in Activity 1, set goals for teaching self-assessment to children in your classroom. For instance, everyone may have done well on assessing behaviors currently being performed. However, some children may have had difficulty assessing behaviors performed earlier in the day. If so, you could establish a goal such as: "Katy, Monty, Ricky, and Desmond will self-assess behaviors performed by themselves earlier in the day 4 out of 5 times." This procedure can be followed for any noted problems. Figure 17 provides you with an example.

Self-Assessment Goals

Teacher/Grade: _____ Date: _____

Description of Period or Activity: After the circle time good morning song.

Teacher Goals	Student Goals
• Students will learn to accurately self-assess their current behavior.	• Katy and Monty will be able to self-assess their current sitting behavior 4 out of 5 times.
• Students will learn to accurately self-assess behaviors that happened earlier in the day.	• Katy, Monty, & Desmond will be able to accurately self-assess behaviors performed by themselves earlier in the day 4 out of 5 times (e.g., singing the morning song).
• Students will learn to accurately self-assess behaviors they have not performed.	• Katy, Monty, Ricky, & Desmond will be able to accurately self-assess whether or not they performed specific classroom behaviors 4 out of 5 times.
• Students will learn to accurately self-assess in situations when the entire group did not behave the same way.	• Katy, Michelle, Ricky, Desmond, Maria, and Sophie will be able to accurately self-assess behaviors they performed, but were not performed by the entire group.

Figure 17

Step 3: Identify Expectations for Self-Assessment

Teacher expectations vary across classrooms, activities, and often across two teachers in the same classroom. It is important that everyone in the classroom (teachers, children, and other staff members) know what is expected from children in regard to self-assessment.

An analysis of the specific behaviors that are involved in successful performance during self-assessment can help you establish a routine. You might consider the following questions:

1. Is it more advantageous to do self-assessment with individual children or with a group in your classroom?

2. Is it appropriate for children to ask their peers for assistance during self-assessment?

3. What should each child do to signal they need help with the self-assessment process?

4. How many steps are in the directions for self-assessment? Can the children follow the needed number of steps?

As you answer these questions, the steps needed to smoothly complete self-assessment can be communicated to the children.

Teacher Activity 3

Identify a classroom routine that could be taught using self-assessment procedures. List the observable behaviors that are components of the routine that might be included in the self-assessment.

Example:

Routine: Preparing to go outside in the winter.
Behaviors: I walked to the coat hooks.
I put on my coat and hat.
I put on my gloves.
I walked to the playground.

These observable behaviors become the expectations you will communicate to children as you teach self-assessment.

Step 4: Teach Self-Assessment

Specific activities to teach children how to self-assess their behaviors can easily be incorporated within other classroom activities such as large group time, free play (as shown in Illustration 12), or transitions. As with any new skill, instructive feedback helps children learn how to assess their own performance. The following example illustrates the feedback that might be given, depending on whether children do or do not demonstrate particular behaviors, and whether or not they self-assess accurately. This also shows how self-assessment opportunities can be provided within the regular daily schedule.

Example: Teaching Children to Assess What They're Currently Doing

Fabricio is teaching his preschool class of four-year-old children to assess their own behavior. He has introduced a game in which he instructs the children to assess their current behavior at different times throughout the day. At this time the children are involved in various activities. Some children are standing at the sink or at the art easels. Other children are sitting on pillows in the reading area, at the table with puzzles, or on the floor with blocks. Fabricio begins by tapping a tone block to get their attention. Then he gives the following instruction.

Teacher: "Everyone who is standing, raise your hand."
Danielle, Alice & Tyrone: (are standing and raise hands)
Teacher: "That's right Danielle. You have your hand up and you are standing at the sink. Alice and Tyrone, you are standing at the art easels with your hands up. Good listening!"
Gretchen: (is standing and does not raise hand)
Teacher: "Gretchen, you are standing at the art easel so you can put your hand up too."
Gretchen: (puts hand up)
Teacher: "That's right, Gretchen, you have your hand up."
Reggie & Sean: (are sitting and do not raise hands)
Children at puzzle table: (are sitting and do not raise hands)
Teacher: "Reggie, Sean, and everyone at the puzzle table, you are not standing and you did not raise your hands. Good job!"
Sharon: (is sitting and raises hand)
Teacher: "Sharon, I asked everyone who is standing to raise their hands. You are sitting on the floor, so your hands are in your lap."
Sharon: (puts hand down)
Teacher: "Good, Sharon, you are not standing so your hands are in your lap."

Illustration 12

Fabricio clearly stated what behavior he expected as he responded to the children's self-assessments. He also gave children who inaccurately assessed their standing behavior an opportunity to correct their assessment. The result is that each child eventually is successful.

The first step to promoting self-assessment is to teach children to report accurately on behaviors in which they are currently engaged. Reporting on behaviors they performed earlier in the day is a more complex skill. Children may need practice in recalling and reporting events or behaviors that occurred earlier. It is also helpful to teach children to assess behaviors that they have not done so they have an opportunity to learn to report on a behavior they did not perform. The following example illustrates a group activity in which the teacher provides all these opportunities.

Example: Teaching Children to Assess Behaviors They Did or Did Not Do

Maria teaches a preschool class and plans to use a self-assessment program. She is concerned that several children might not be able to assess their own behavior accurately. In order to teach the skill, Maria plays a thumbs-up and thumbs-down game with the children. She uses behaviors and situations that do not imply correctness or incorrectness and are easy to observe.

Teacher: "Now we are going to play a game. Listen to what I say so that I don't trick you. We're ready to start. If you went to the playground during outdoor time today, put thumbs up (models thumbs up)."
Everyone: (puts thumbs up)
Teacher: "That's right. We all went to the playground today. Put thumbs up if you wore a coat to school today (models thumb up)."
Mickey: (Puts his thumbs up but changes her mind.)
Teacher: "Good listening, boys and girls. I'm glad you were careful, Mickey. It is so hot today that nobody wore a coat, so nobody should have thumbs up. The next one is a little tricky. Put thumbs down if you do not have on shorts today (models thumbs down)."
Several children: (put thumbs down)
Teacher: "Let's see who did not get tricked! Good job, Darren and Cindy. You do not have on shorts so you put your thumbs down. Everyone, look at your clothes . If you are not wearing shorts, put thumbs down. If you are wearing shorts, you should have your hands in your lap."
Everyone: (with some assistance, either put thumbs down or hands in laps)
Teacher: "Good! Here's another one. If you did wear shorts to school today, put thumbs up (models thumbs up)."
Children wearing shorts: (put thumbs up)
Teacher: "Great listening! Everyone with thumbs up did wear shorts today, and everyone with hands in lap did not wear shorts today.

Implementing Self-Assessment During Classroom Routines:

After children demonstrate that they can accurately assess their own performance using behaviors that are not rule-related, you can instruct the children to assess their performance related to classroom routines and classroom rules. It might be difficult for some children to report that they did not follow a classroom rule. You can find creative ways to address this problem. For example, you might use a puppet to teach the skill by telling the children to observe and evaluate the puppet's behavior. After the children accurately assess the puppet's behavior, you can include instructions for the children to assess their own behavior. As with any new skill, children need opportunities to practice.

Posted illustrations of classroom rules and routines can provide a visual guide for the children. For example, you might refer to a classroom poster that illustrates a clean-up routine, and instruct the children to report on their clean-up performance after free play. As children become more skilled, you might simply tell them to refer to the classroom poster as a reminder of what behavior is expected. Being able to identify behaviors in a routine and compare their behaviors to those expectations helps children become more independent. When children are able to recognize that they have not followed the steps in a routine or have not followed the expectations, they are beginning to develop an awareness of when they need to change their behavior. Thus, they have an opportunity to demonstrate self-control.

Before using a self-assessment procedure, determine which observable behaviors are components of the new routine, and then instruct the children to assess their performance on each of these behaviors. In the following example, Ms. Kirmer incorporates self-assessment as she teaches the children the new routine for independent performance. The only material required is a poster that illustrates the new routine.

Example: Using Self-Assessment to Teach Independent Performance

Ms. Kirmer teaches a kindergarten class in the public schools. During the first month of school Ms. Kirmer observed what tasks each child could complete without her assistance. Now she is ready to use those tasks to teach independent performance during an activity period. To begin, the children are familiar with the location of their materials and have also practiced assessing their own behavior. Using a poster to illustrate the steps, Ms. Kirmer introduced the new routine during the large group period. Now she instructs the children to assess their own performance as they rehearse the routine.

Teacher: "Now we are going to practice. Boys and girls from the zebra group, please walk to get your bins, take them to your table, and sit down."
Zebra Group: (children walk with their bins to the table and sit down)
Teacher: "Everyone in the Zebra group, look at our chart. The first step is, 'I walked to get my bin." If you walked over to get your bin, put thumbs up."
Zebra Group: (children put thumbs up)
Teacher: "That's right, you all walked. Everyone in the Lion group, please walk to get your bins, take them to your table, and sit down."
Lion Group: (children walk with their bin to the table and sit down)
Teacher: "Everyone in the Lion group, look at our chart. If you remembered to walk over and pick up your bin, put thumbs up."
Lion Group: (children put thumbs up)
Teacher: "Good job! Everybody in the Giraffe group, if you are sitting quietly in the circle with me, put thumbs up."
Giraffe Group: (all children are quiet and all but Alice put thumbs up)
Teacher: "Alice, you are sitting very quietly in the circle. You can put your thumbs up, too. Everyone is doing a great job today."

As the children practiced the new routine, Ms. Kirmer gave them positive feedback about their performance. She also helped Alice assess her behavior accurately. Ms. Kirmer's ultimate goal is for the children to demonstrate independence during the activity period without reminders to look at the classroom poster or instructions to self-assess their performance. However, Ms. Kirmer has decided that the classroom poster provides a useful visual prompt. She uses self-assessment to draw the children's attention to the new routine. Within a few days she will begin to refer to the poster less frequently. In addition, she will gradually decrease the number of times she instructs children to assess their own performance.

Initially, you might instruct children to assess their performance on all the skills involved in a new routine. As the children become more skilled, you can gradually select fewer behaviors to assess each day, randomly including those behaviors which are consistently demonstrated, as well as those that are not demonstrated.

After the children have learned a new routine, positive feedback to the entire class will help maintain the children's skills. Occasionally, it might be helpful to instruct children to assess their behavior in order to maintain the expected level of performance.

Example: Using Self-Assessment to Review Transition Routine

Mrs. Young has noticed that some of her children are becoming careless about putting toys and other materials away during the clean-up transition from free play to circle time. She decided to address this problem by having the children assess their own performance.

Teacher:	(ringing the bell to signal that it is time to stop and listen) "Boys and girls, if you stopped playing when I rang the bell for clean-up, raise your hands."
Group:	(all raised hands)
Teacher:	"Great! I was watching and everyone remembered the fist step on our clean-up chart. You may continue putting your materials away now."
Group:	(all continue with clean-up and then take their places for circle time)
Teacher:	"Raise your hands if you put all your materials where they belong.
Group:	(all raised hands)
Teacher:	"That's right. I saw that everyone was very careful with the materials. Ivy and Aletta, you put all the blocks on the right shelves. Jack and Naomi, I know it's hard to put the marble roll away, but you did it! Everyone, pat yourself on the back for doing a great job."

Mrs. Young has found that instructing the children to assess their own performance is a convenient way to remind them of the behaviors she expects. She was careful to begin with a step that the children had performed correctly so that all the children could raise their hands. During her compliment, she drew the children's attention to the clean-up chart. As a result of this indirect reminder, they took greater care when putting their materials away. In fact, many of the children enjoyed the opportunity to assess their own behavior.

Implementing One-To-One Self-Assessment Procedures

Some children may have difficulty learning self-assessment skills. Once the materials have been prepared, you can implement a one-to-one self-assessment procedure during a transition or activity period. After the routine has been explained, both you and the child assess the child's performance during the routine. You both mark "yes" or "no" (words or symbols) on separate self-assessment cards, and then visually compare the two cards. The child receives feedback related to the accuracy of the self-assessment, as well as their performance during the transition or activity routine.

Self-Assessment Picture Cards

Some children in the class might need to carry laminated self-assessment picture cards as they learn the steps of a new routine. On the cards are illustrations of children performing the various skills that are needed. The skills should be described in observable terms that can be rated by a simple "yes" or "no" response. For instance, "I walked to the table." The number of skills illustrated on the self-assessment cards will depend on your expectations for the activity and the children's current skills.

Symbols, such as thumbs up and thumbs down, as shown in Illustration 13, can be put beside each illustration as a prompt for the children to monitor their own performance on each behavior. For some children, the cards might be used as visual prompts only for the first few days.

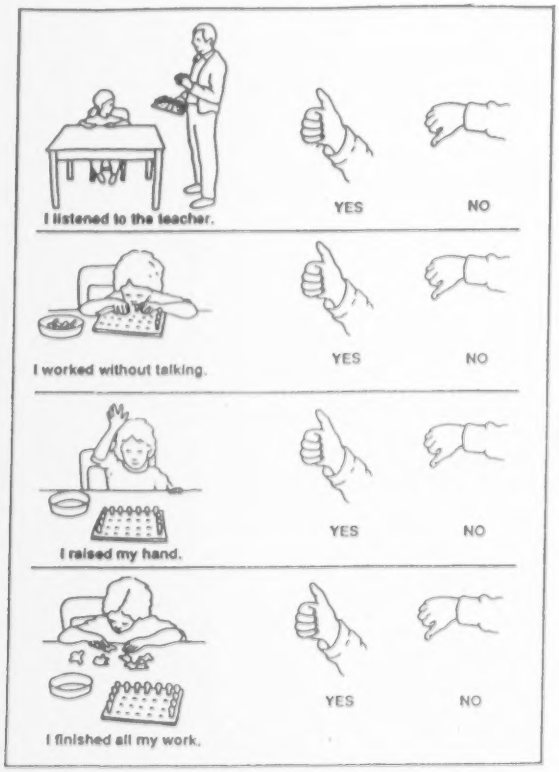

Illustration 13

You can tailor the self-assessment cards to meet the individual needs of children. For a child who has difficulty learning the routine, you might decide to make a series of self-assessment cards beginning with only one or two skills, such as walking with a bin of materials. When the first skill

is demonstrated, you might give the child a new card with the original skills plus one or two additional skills.

There are several steps involved in this one-to-one assessment strategy:

1. **Prepare individualized self-assessment materials.**
   a. Choose the targeted skills based on observations of the child's behavior.
   b. Make an individualized self-assessment card for the child that illustrates the targeted skills.
   c. Make an identical self-assessment card for you.

2. **Introduce the matching procedure to the child prior to the first transition or activity period during which it will be used.**
   a. Show the individualized self-assessment card to the child, identifying the skills that are targeted on the card.
   b. Show the child how to mark the "yes" or "no" (words or symbols) on the card, depending on whether or not the behavior occurred.
   c. Inform the child that both you and the child will mark assessment cards and then match the results.
   d. Practice the self-assessment and matching procedures with the child using the skills on the child's card.

3. **Incorporate the one-to-one matching procedure into the transition or activity period.**
   a. Refer to the card prior to and during the transition or activity period and remind the child, as needed, of the behaviors that are expected.
   b. Record the child's performance on your assessment card.
   c. Assist the child in marking the self-assessment card, as needed, immediately after a step in the routine has been completed.
      - Read the step to the child.
      - Instruct the child to mark the "yes" or "no" response.
   d. Place both cards together and match your marks with the child's marks.
   e. Provide positive and instructive feedback according to the accuracy of the child's self-assessment and to the particular skill.
   f. Remind the child of the behavior that is expected in the next step of the routine.

4. **Decrease your role in the child's self-assessment, according to the child's progress.**
   a. Extend the period of time before instructing the child to mark the assessment card until the child is able to independently mark the card at the end of the period.
   b. Add new skills to the assessment card as the child becomes competent with the previous skills.
   c. Decrease, over time, the number of prompts given directly to the child prior to and during the transition or activity period.
   d. Decrease, over time, the positive feedback given directly to the child during the transition or activity period, eventually waiting until the end of the routine to provide feedback.

e. Decrease, over time, the number of skills in which you and the child match the assessment cards.

5. **Monitor and maintain appropriate skills while gradually withdrawing the entire self-assessment program.**
   a. Provide positive feedback to the child, as needed to maintain performance.
   b. Instruct the child to self-assess behaviors, as needed to maintain performance.

This strategy can be incorporated into group self-assessment procedures that might be implemented for other children in the class. The distinction is that the initial requirements for the child who needs individual assistance might be different.

Step 5: Monitor and Maintain Self-Assessment

The Class Progress Report Form, used in previous chapters, might help you monitor your children's progress. If off-task behavior begins to increase or if children are seeking more feedback, you might review the steps for planning and facilitating self-assessment opportunities that are presented in this chapter. You may find that a particular step needs attention. For example, children might distract others or seek assistance if the tasks are too easy or too difficult. Perhaps the children need to review the rules and the routine. As with other skills, periodic evaluations of the children's progress is important.

The Teacher Monitoring Form found in the Appendix (Form I), provides a method for recording the performance of several children during the independent activity period. The form should include the same observable skills as the children's self-assessment cards. This will help you keep a record of the performance of children who have difficulty learning the routine, or who do not self-assess accurately. This record can be used to determine the best approach for teaching individual children.

Teacher Monitoring Form

Date: October 17 Time: 10:00 - 10:15

Activity: Independent seat work

Instructions: Record the expected behaviors to observe across the top of each column. When monitoring during an activity, record the names of target children under each child's name in the left-hand column. Mark your assessment in the top section of each box and mark the child's self-assessment in the bottom section of the box.
Mark "+" (yes) if the child did demonstrate the behavior.
Mark "-" (no) if the child did not demonstrate the behavior.

Child/Tasks:	Behaviors To Be Observed:				
	Walks to table	Works quietly	Remains in seat	Raises hand for help	Finishes all work
Angela	+ / +	+ / +	- / +	+ / +	- / +
Mike	+ / +	- / +	- / -	+ / -	+ / -
Cheryl	+ / +	+ / +	+ / -	- / +	- / +

Figure 18

The Teacher Monitoring Form should be tailored to meet the needs of you and your students. Figure 18 provides you with an example of the form which lists the children's names who are having difficulty in the left hand column and the specific skills required across the top. A "+" or "-" (yes or no) is used in the top section of the box, depending on whether specific children did or did not exhibit specific skills. Recording the children's self-assessments in the bottom section of the box helps to determine those who have difficulty self-assessing, as well as those who have difficulty learning the activity or routine. Initially, you might decide to record the children's performance on only one or two skills.

Chapter 5
Planning for Future Transitions

PURPOSE

Preparing children for a smooth transition to a new classroom setting requires careful planning before the transition and often includes instructional adaptation after the transition. The cornerstone of planning for transitions into the next classroom setting is determining whether a discrepancy exists between the next teacher's expectations about specific behaviors and a child's current level of performance relative to those expectations. SLIDE uses four steps in the transition planning process: 1) gathering information about teachers' behavioral expectations in the next setting, 2) determining individual children's current level of performance relative to those future expectations 3) selecting strategies for reducing discrepancies between children's current level of performance and future classroom expectations, and 4) identifying parents' priorities. Based on these pieces of information, decisions can be made about best placement options, the types of support that will be necessary in the next placement, and strategies to prepare children for that setting.

The steps outlined below to facilitate transitions can be integrated into a school or district's existing transition policies and practices, adapted to expand current practices, and individualized based on child and family needs.

PREPARATION

Successful transitions for young children, particularly those with special instructional needs, depends on careful preparation before the transition. School personnel and parents may want to develop an individualized plan for a child's transition, set instructional goals and select appropriate interventions to meet these goals.

ASSESSING

Determining Expectations of the Next Setting:

Sending teachers may first want to identify the range of options available for the next placement for their students. For example, will students be placed in a specific class, a specific school or region in a district, a specific district, or will they need a special education placement. By learning about teacher's expectations in each of the possible next placement options and assessing a child's performance relative to those expectations, an instructional team can determine how ready a child is for those settings. Surveying teachers in the next setting using the **Teacher Importance**

Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors (Form J in the Appendix) will help to identify the social and behavioral skills receiving teachers consider most important for classroom success. When the receiving teacher can be identified in advance, the **Teacher Importance Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors** and the sending teacher's **Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors** (Form K in the Appendix) can be used to compare current abilities with future expectations, assist with planning, and identify discrepancies. In many cases, however, the identification of the receiving teacher is not possible. Therefore, rating scores can be obtained from all teachers or from a sample in the receiving grade level in a selected school district to gain an average score of teacher expectations. The **Teacher Importance Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors** asks a teacher to rate expectations of their children regarding skills in instruction following, transitioning, independent activities, pro-social communication, and self-care behaviors. Teachers rate these skills on a 5-point scale from not important to extremely important. Because teachers' behavioral expectations can vary in the course of a school year, we advise teachers to fill out the form based on the expectations they would have in the middle of the school year (i.e., January).

Determining Children's Performance in Current Settings:

A careful assessment by the child's current teacher of his/her independence skills, using the **Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors** form, typically is completed after the teacher has an opportunity to observe children in different classroom situations and can make a fair assessment of a child's current abilities. The **Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors** form asks the current teacher to rate expectations of a child or children on the same sets of skills (instruction following, transitioning, independent activities, pro-social communication, and self-care behaviors) as the form used for teachers in the next setting. Teachers fill out this form based on a 5-point scale from the child being not able, to extremely able, to complete the skill. A simple method of making comparisons between a child's current capabilities and future expectations in the next classroom setting can be done using the **Analysis of Rating Scores Form** (Form L in the Appendix). By carefully matching the results of the sending teacher's assessment with the ratings recorded by future or receiving teachers in a school or district, teachers are better prepared to determine a child's strengths and challenges. If discrepancies are high in specific areas for specific children, these should be areas for concentration for IEP and/or classroom goals. For example, if a child works well in group activities, but is having difficulty with transitioning to new activities, a goal might be to reduce transition time by following a series of instructional steps given by the teacher. By reviewing the discrepancy data, objectives can be identified and specific instructional strategies implemented to help prepare children for future classroom expectations.

Parent Involvement in Assessment:

Parents who choose to be involved in transition planning can indicate the types of activities in which they would like to be involved and their specific concerns or needs related to the transition process. This can be done using the **Parent's Involvement Checklist** (Form M in the Appendix).

For example, a parent might indicate that they would like to work with the teacher to help determine placement options or complete a checklist regarding tasks performed by the child at home.

The **Parent's Importance Ratings of Child's Independent Skills** (Form N in the Appendix) can be used by parents to rate their child's performance on a list of skills similar to those represented on the **Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors** form completed by the teacher. Parent input can provide information that will assist parents and teachers in their selection of transition goals and activities and a list of skills that parents might reinforce in the home setting. The combined assessment information from teachers and parents will provide a more complete picture of a child's capabilities.

Administrative Involvement:

Administrators in both preschool and elementary settings can set the stage for successful transitions by supporting the assessment process and the ongoing communication and cooperation among staff. Some of the areas of support might include:

- Facilitating the assessment survey of receiving teachers.
- Scheduling release time for teachers to allow them to participate in transition-related activities.
- Establishing procedures to facilitate communication between sending and receiving programs and between teachers and parents.
- Visiting classroom programs and providing support for teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION

INTERVENTION AND MONITORING

At this time, both sending and receiving teachers and parents (if they choose) can begin to implement the SLIDE teaching strategies outlined in the previous chapters. For example, incorporating group instruction strategies or rewarding the endpoint of an activity may become part of daily classroom activities and routines. In addition, monitoring child progress is essential to determine when specific goals have been achieved or when children are experiencing difficulty. Teachers might need to adapt specific goals and strategies to assist children in achieving success. Following mastery of specific skills, teachers and parents can develop new goals and objectives. For children who have IEPs, it will be particularly important to record progress, dates of completion of specific objectives, and new goals and objectives.

At the end of the school year, sending teachers may want to complete the **Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors** form again to identify the gains in child performance from

pre- to post-assessment periods. This information could be shared with parents and receiving teachers.

FOLLOW-UP

The sending teacher, a transition coordinator, or other support staff may be able to provide follow-up and support to the receiving teacher during the beginning of the next school year. The amount of time support is needed will vary for specific teachers and children. Receiving teachers might benefit from the continued support from those who are most familiar with a child by receiving information about teaching or classroom strategies that have been successful with a specific child or children.

SUMMARY

It is clear that successful transitions will require effort on the part of administrators, teachers, and parents (if they choose to be involved). While changes in existing school practices might be necessary to promote collaborative planning and preparation for transitions, such efforts will greatly benefit parents and staff in preschool and early elementary classrooms to ensure successful instructional teaching across settings.

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Appendix

Reproducible Masters:

Classroom Assessment Form (A)

Goals and Expectations (B)

Classroom rules and Environmental Assessment (C)

Class Progress Report (D)

Independent Performance Activities (E)

Group Instruction Planning (F)

Self-Assessment Form (G)

Self-Assessment Goals and Expectations (H)

Teacher Monitoring Form (I)

Teacher Importance Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors (J)

Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors (K)

Analysis of Rating Scores (L)

Parent Involvement Checklist (M)

Parent's Importance Ratings of Child's Independent Skills (N)

Form A

Classroom Assessment Form

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Grade: _____ Starting Time: _____

Skill Component: _____ Ending Time: _____

Description of Period or Activity: _____

_____

_____

_____

What's Going Well:	What Needs Improvement:

Form B

Goals and Expectations

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Grade: _____ Activity: _____

Primary problem(s): _____

_____

Goals

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Expectations

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Plan	Student Plan

Form C

Classroom Rules and Environmental Assessment

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Component Title: _____

Classroom Rules

Environmental Assessment

Form D

Class Progress Report

Teacher: _____ Skill Component: _____

School: _____ Starting Time: _____

Date: _____ Ending Time: _____

Description of Period or Activity: _____

_____

INSTRUCTIONS: List target children in the classroom in the left column. Record rules and each step of a routine across the top of the form. Observe children during one or more activity periods. For a large group of children, the teacher may need to observe a few children at a time over several days. Record plus (+) or a minus (-) to indicate whether or not children perform each behavior during an observation period.

Name of Student	Rules and Routine (Expected Child Behaviors)					

General Comments: _____

_____

_____

Form E

Independent Performance Activities

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Describe how your materials will be organized in your classroom for independent activities: (E.g., will you organize materials for individual children or arrange materials according to levels?) _____

Materials:	Completion Objective:	Suggested Children:

Form F

Group Instruction Planning

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Activity/Theme: _____

_____

_____

_____

Skills to Address:	Materials Needed:

Response Modes and Tasks:

Response Modes:

Tasks: Target Child(ren):

Form G

Self-Assessment Form

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Grade: _____ Starting Time: _____

Skill Component: _____ Ending Time: _____

Description of Activity Period: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Self-Assessment Instructions	Children with Difficulty

Form H

Self-Assessment Goals and Expectations

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Grade: _____ Skill Component: _____

Description of Period or Activity: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Goals	Student Goals

Form I

Teacher Monitoring Form

Date: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____

_____

_____

Instructions: Record the expected behaviors to observe across the top of each column. When monitoring during an activity, record the names of target children and the assigned tasks under each child's name in the left-hand column. Mark your assessment in the top section of each box and mark the child's self-assessment in the bottom section of the box.

Mark "+" (yes) if the child did demonstrate the behavior.
Mark "-" (no) if the child did not demonstrate the behavior.

Child/Tasks:	Behaviors To Be Observed:				
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Form J

Teacher Importance Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Grade Level: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: We are interested in determining how important it is for children in your class to achieve the following independent classroom behaviors. Please read each item below and rate how important it is for children in your class to perform the skill on most occasions *by January of the school year*. Use the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

A. Instruction Following Skills	Rating Scale
1. Can understand and follow individual instructions of no more than 3 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Can understand and follow group instructions of no more than 3 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Can understand and follow complex instructions consisting of 4-6 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Can remember and follow 3-step instructions given 15 minutes before an activity.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Takes cues from peers and imitates their behavior during routine activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. In general, complies with teacher directives.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
7. In general, follows classroom rules.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
8. Changes behavior after a single reminder.	1 2 3 4 5 NA

B. Transition Skills	
1. Recognizes transition cue and stops ongoing activity.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Cleans up with minimal teacher assistance after an activity using established routine.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Moves quickly and directly to next activity/location.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Begins next activity according to established routine or specific instructions.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Completes transitions involving 3 or more steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. Completes transitions within allotted time.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
C. Independent Activity Skills	
1. Finds necessary materials and begins activity promptly using established routines.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Follows instructions for independent work activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Stays on task with minimal supervision during individual activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Uses established procedures to request assistance.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Completes tasks within allotted time.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. Engages in appropriate activities following work completion.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
D. Pro-Social communication Skills	
1. Solicits attention from peers, adults appropriately.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Plays cooperatively with peers.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Works cooperatively with peers (waits, takes turns, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 NA
E. Self-Care Behaviors	
1. Toilets without supervision	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Dresses/undresses for outdoors without assistance.	1 2 3 4 5 NA

Form K

Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the following rating scale to describe the current level of classroom performance for any child who is preparing for transition to another setting. For each item, circle the rating to indicate how much a child is like the behavioral description.

1	2	3	4	5
Not Like	A Little Like	Somewhat Like	Very Much Like	Extremely Like

If the item is not applicable to the child, please circle NA (Not Applicable).

A. Instruction Following Skills	Rating Scale
1. Can understand and follow individual instructions of no more than 3 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Can understand and follow group instructions of no more than 3 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Can understand and follow complex instructions consisting of 4-6 steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Can remember and follow 3-step instructions given 15 minutes before an activity.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Takes cues from peers and imitates their behavior during routine activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. In general, complies with teacher directives.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
7. In general, follows classroom rules.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
8. Changes behavior after a single reminder.	1 2 3 4 5 NA

G. Transition Skills	
1. Recognizes transition cue and stops ongoing activity.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Cleans up with minimal teacher assistance after an activity using established routine.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Moves quickly and directly to next activity/location.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Begins next activity according to established routine or specific instructions.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Completes transitions involving 3 or more steps.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. Completes transitions within allotted time.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
C. Independent Activity Skills	
1. Finds necessary materials and begins activity promptly using established routines.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Follows instructions for independent work activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Stays on task with minimal supervision during individual activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
4. Uses established procedures to request assistance.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
5. Completes tasks within allotted time.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
6. Engages in appropriate activities following work completion.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
D. Pro-Social communication Skills	
1. Solicits attention from peers, adults appropriately.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Plays cooperatively with peers.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
3. Works cooperatively with peers (waits, takes turns, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 NA
E. Self-Care Behaviors	
1. Toilets without supervision.	1 2 3 4 5 NA
2. Dresses/undresses for outdoors without assistance	1 2 3 4 5 NA

Form L

Analysis of Rating Scores

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Grade Level: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: This form is used to determine the discrepancy scores from the assessments given by sending and receiving teachers. Record the mean ratings of the Teacher Importance Ratings of Children's Independent Classroom Behaviors forms from the receiving teachers in column 1 and the rating from the sending teacher of individual or groups of children using the Assessment of Child's Independent Classroom Behaviors form in column 2 to determine a discrepancy score for each skill. Compute and record a mean discrepancy score for each skill category. Mean discrepancy score = sum of discrepancy scores divided by number of skills in each category.

Skill Item	1 Mean Teacher Importance Rating	2 Assessment of Children's Independence Skills	3 Discrepancy Scores
INSTRUCTION FOLLOWING SKILLS			
1. Can understand and follow instructions			
2. Can understand and follow group instructions			
3. Can understand and follow complex instructions			
4. Can remember and follow 3-step instructions			
5. Takes cues from peers and imitates their behavior			
6. Complies with teacher directives			
7. Follows classroom rules			
8. Changes behavior after a reminder			
Mean Instruction Discrepancy Score:			
TRANSITION SKILLS			
1. Recognizes transition cue and stops activity			
2. Cleans up with minimal teacher assistance			
3. Moves quickly and directly to next activity			
4. Begins next activity according to routine			
5. Completes transition involving 3 or more steps			
6. Completes transitions within allotted time			
Mean Transition Discrepancy Score:			
INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY SKILLS			
1. Finds necessary materials and begins activity			
2. Follows instructions			
3. Stays on task with minimal supervision			
4. Uses established procedures to request assistance			
5. Completes tasks within allotted time			
6. Engages in appropriate activities			
Mean Independent Discrepancy Score:			

PRO-SOCIAL COMMUNICATION			
1. Solicits attention from peers, adults			
2. Plays cooperatively with peers			
3. Works cooperatively with peers			
Mean Pro-social Score:			
SELF-CARE BEHAVIORS			
1. Toilets without supervision			
2. Dresses/undresses for outdoors without assistance			
Mean Self-Care Behaviors Score:			

Form M

Parent Involvement Checklist

Child: _____ Date: _____
Parent: _____ School: _____
Teacher: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: The following items were designed to determine your preferred level of involvement in transition planning for your child. It will also help you and the teacher determine what parent activities may be most valuable for you.

CHOICE OF ACTIVITIES

Please circle one of the three ratings to indicate the activities in which you are interested.

1 ----------2----------3
Very Interested Somewhat Interested Not Interested

	RATING SCALE
1. Completing a rating form about some of the skills my child is doing at home.	1 2 3
2. Working with the teacher to decide which independence skills we would like to target for my child to work on at school.	1 2 3
3. Working with the teacher to determine which independence skills would be helpful to target at home.	1 2 3
4. Attending a group meeting to learn more about specific strategies for home/school collaboration.	1 2 3
5. Meeting with the teacher to discuss the progress my child is making at home and at school.	1 2 3

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

Form N

Parent's Importance Ratings of Child's Independent Skills

Child: _____ Parent: _____ Date: _____

Please circle the appropriate rating that best describes how often your child performs the following tasks at home. If the task or behavior is not applicable to your child, or if there is no opportunity to observe, please circle NA (not applicable).

1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Never Seldom Sometimes Usually Always

	RATING SCALE					
INSTRUCTION FOLLOWING SKILLS						
Listens and looks at me when I am talking.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Understands simple instructions.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Answers simple questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Follows instructions.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
HOUSEHOLD BEHAVIOR SKILLS						
Complies with my requests.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Changes behavior after a reminder.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Knows how to ask for help (e.g., getting a drink of water).	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Talks (signs) to me.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE SKILLS						
Stops an activity when it is time to begin a new one.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Puts toys or materials away without help.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Plays alone with favorite toys.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Chooses free time activities (e.g.,looks at a book, plays with toys).	1	2	3	4	5	NA
SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION SKILLS						
Talks (signs) to others.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Works cooperatively with others.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Takes turns when playing with other children.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

HEALTH/SELF-CARE SKILLS						
Toilets without supervision.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Washes and dries hands.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Brushes teeth without help.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Dresses for school without help.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Finds personal items (e.g., coat, shoes, toys).	1	2	3	4	5	NA

List additional skills that you would like for your child to learn this year :